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A SAINT OF MODERN INDIA

[Glimpses into the life of Sri T. L. Vaswani]

VOLUME THREE

By

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GITA PUBLISHING HOUSE,
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IMPORTANT

We deeply regret that due to unavoidable reason publication of this special number has been u delayed.

Kindly note that this is a combined issue for the months, December 1974 to February 1975.

Our next issue will be out on 1st March 1975.

—The Manage

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Wanderer of the Lord

In Jamshedpur, a Parsi young man came to ʼaniji. He belonged to a good family and was posted in the Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd. He missed Vaswaniji's meetings and was always seated in the front row.

This Parsi youth had a longing for spiritual life vas eager to gain a glimpse of God. One early ng, he came to Vaswaniji and poured out his to him. "I seek your blessings, Master, for would gain a vision of God."

serene smile played upon Vaswaniji's lips as he the words of this Parsi gentleman.

What may I do, Master," inquired the youth, hold the Beautous One?"

aswaniji smiled and replied: "Follow these few rules. Live a life of purity and prayer. Envy and harm no creature. Keep away from lust. ip Truth and be content with what God hath to give you. Also continue to repeat the Name ."

he eager youth, it seems, had already done all Yet he had not been blessed with a vision of He earnestly pleaded and said: "Vivekananda rtunate enough to behold God. I come to you

as Vivekananda went to Sri Ramakrishna. Be good enough to grant me a glimpse of God, for you are my Ramakrishna!"

. Vaswaniji remarked: "Speak not so. I am not Ramakrishna. I am but his servant. I ever aspire to be a servant of the saints."

The young man seemed to be bent upon getting the vision of God. For four days together he came and repeated his request and pressed his point. Vaswaniji did his best to dissuade the Parsi gentleman. As he persisted, Vaswaniji said to him one evening: "Can you do one simple thing?"

The young man rejoiced as he felt that his aspiration was about to be fulfilled. "Oh, yes!" he said, "I will do anything that you command."

"Then go to a barber's shop, have your head shaved clean and go to your officers and clerks with your head bare. Then come to me and report everything to me," said Vaswaniji.

Staggered and abashed, the gentleman said: "But how can I go to my office with a bald head? I will become the laughing stock of my superiors as well as subordinates. I will not take such a risk."

The young man went away never to return again.

Vaswaniji's thoughts kept turning to this young man who gave up coming to him. Several days later, referring to him, he said: "This young man possessed several qualities. But he had not crushed his ego. It is the ego which conceals God from man, which stands as a barrier between God and man, which keeps man away from God.

"Blessed were the gopis of Brindaban for they had merged themselves in their beloved, Sri Krishna. They had lost all body-consciousness. They had risen above their ego. All their thoughts were centred upon Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was the centre and circumference of their lives. Their hearts rejoiced at His sight, they danced in sheer delight when He took up His flute and poured out ravishing strains from it.

"They that would behold the Light of God and

drink in His Beauty must become naught, must reduce themselves to zero."

From Jamshedpur, Vaswaniji returned to Calcutta. On 26 January 1945, he was invited to give a lecture at the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj. He had a long association with this institution and accepted the invitation.

About forty years ago when Vaswaniji was a professor in the Metropolitan College, Calcutta, he had stayed for sometime in the Brahmo Samaj in the close vicinity of his gurudev, Sri Promotholal Sen. His gurudev was now no more. He therefore visited the room where his spiritual preceptor had once lived and invoked his blessings. For Vaswaniji this spot was hallowed by several fond memories and associations.

Vaswaniji then visited the sacred samadhis of Sri Promotholal Sen, Sri Keshub Chandra Sen and some of his associates. The spot had an air of rare sanctity about it because of the holy remains of Sri Keshub Chandra Sen and his nephew, Sri Promotholal Sen. Vaswaniji invoked the blessings of each one, and then went to the hall where he was to speak.

During the course of his speech Vaswaniji spoke in touching terms of the vision of the great founder of the Nava Vidhan Brahmo Samaj, Sri Keshub Chandra Sen. The people sat spell-bound throughout his discourse. Some of them recalled the days when they had heard young Professor Vaswani, who now stood before them forty years later, with his hair turned grey.

Vaswaniji was requested to address a special meeting organised by students at Sivanath Memorial Hall. Principal Niranjan Neogi was in the chair. Vaswaniji spoke on "Indian Ideals in Education". Extracts from the reports of his speech published in "Excelsior!" are being reproduced here.

Education in India, according to Vaswaniji, must be a synthesis of the three great forces of Indian history,—the Aryan, the Muslim and the Modern. The Aryan included the Hindu and the Buddhist. Hindu Rishis of old preached One Brotherhood, One

Life, flowing into all, and the Buddha, emphasising the same teaching, urged that people must be unselfish; they must share with others.

Islamic culture which was rich in sublime thoughts was also a great force in Indian history.

There were some good points about the Modern also. Its science, technical advancement and political history had a great value for the Indian student. He had much to learn from the West. Russia had done one great thing among others. There was abolition of the system of examination; but here, in India, students found themselves involved more and more in the machinery of examinations. But when they entered the larger university of life, what did these do?

As regards the ideals which should be kept in view in planning out the country's education, Vaswaniji said, education was a problem in consciousness; in every child there was a life-force which must be drawn out gently. There were three cardinal principles laid down by ancient sages and these should be inculcated in their educational planning. These were: reverence for the teacher, reverence for the physical, the body which was the vehicle of the spirit, and reverence for the poor.

In imparting education, the brain should not be their sole concern; the hands should also receive their due attention. Handicrafts must also be taught and Indian students must be given industrial training.

Vaswaniji narrated how on his way from Lahore he had seen all along the railway line numbers of famished, emaciated people. "Coming to Calcutta the other day," he said, "I went over to a place near Kalighat and once again I found so many poor persons, their bodies thin and emaciated, and once again in my heart arose the cry:—'Where art Thou, O Lord?'"

Service and sacrifice, according to Vaswaniji, must be the inspiration of the New Education; otherwise, education would have little meaning.

"Filled with a spirit of service and sacrifice,"

he concluded, "go forth as stainless soldiers of the Motherland and whoso fights and whoso falls in the service of the lowly and the lost,—he is blessed; for truth and justice triumph in him for evermore!"

Vaswaniji's heart moved out in sympathy to those whose bodies were thin and emaciated. It was not lip sympathy that he gave them. He always felt happy whenever he fed the poor. Accompanied by a small group, he once went to the Temple at Kalighat to distribute food among the starving poor who sat outside the Temple. He took with himself baskets of luchis and allodam. The very sight of these baskets was so tempting that the poor could hardly wait. They immediately pounced upon the baskets.

Vaswaniji witnessed the scene as a silent spectator, as one detached. Not so the other companions! One of the brothers lost temper. In a harsh tone, he ordered them to maintain discipline. A poor man, who had been reduced to a mere skeleton, said to this brother: "You rich people know not what it is to starve and so you ask us to behave. If you only knew what it is to go without food for days together, you would not speak so harshly." The poor man's words, spoken from the bottom of his heart, silenced the brother.

Vaswaniji was invited by the Congress Workers' Sanga, where he was asked to speak on "Amar Desh", "Our Motherland".

During the course of his speech, Vaswaniji said:

"Three groups of servers are India's urgent need, at this hour. The first group I shall call 'volunteers'—volunteers of India, volunteers of the nation. I am afraid, we still are thinking in terms of the 'Hindu', the 'Mussalman', the 'Christian', etc. Why can't we think in terms of India? Volunteers of India are needed, volunteers of the nation.

"Who is a volunteer? A volunteer is one who pays homage to the nation, who thinks of India first. India first, India first: this is the watchword and this is the *mantra* of every one who would be a volunteer of the nation.

"The second group I call 'wanderers'. They go, from place to place, taking with them the message of India and of India's great ones. They go to the villages, they go to meet the poor ones, they go to meet those who are in need and in suffering. They speak to the village-folk of India and Indian ideals.

"A third group is, also, needed. May I speak of it as the group of 'worshippers'? Young men! I ask you not to be staggered at the mention of the word 'worshipper'. Worship literally means 'worthship': and what is worthship? Worthship is appreciation of worth. Worthship or worship, therefore, is reverence for the noble. When I offer reverence of my heart to a man, I worship him. Worship is homage.

"In these tragic times, friends, I have, again and again, sat in my corner of silence. I have thought of India: I have meditated upon India, the Mother! And sometimes, I have seen a storm, and I have heard the noises of the coming days. Then have I cried, 'O India, my Mother!'

"I have heard the noise of the storm. Who knows the storm may be a prelude to the fulfilment of India's mission? And then, going deeper into my meditation, I have seen the Mother unharmed in the midst of the storm,—untouched by the tempest! I have seen the Mother riding the storm: I have seen the Mother riding the noise and chaos of the crumbling world,—in Her hand the blue banner.

"Then? What then? I have seen the old epoch going: I have seen a new epoch rising! And I breathe out an aspiration that you and I, in waking thoughts, in dreams at night, in our work, in our worship, in our daily activities, in the inner thoughts of mind, in the aspiration of the heart, think of Her, the Mother; serve Her, the Mother; and be ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in the honour and freedom of the Mother, in the coming days!"

Before leaving Calcutta for Sind, Vaswaniji desired to visit Navadweep or Nadia, the birthplace of Nimai. Nimai was a great scholar, who turned into a bhakta

and came to be known as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Krishna-intoxicated. It was in Nadia that Nimai had played the leela of his life about five hundred years ago. It is said that the streets and lanes of Nadia reverberated with the sounds of Hari bol! Hari bol, bhai! even in 1945 when Vaswaniji went there.

As if in conformance to some predestined plan, Govind Babu, a Bengali of Nadia, was on a visit to Calcutta and met Vaswaniji. Govind Babu had read Vaswaniji's books several years ago and since then he had become his ardent admirer. This admirer had looked forward to the day when Vaswaniji would bless his home with his holy presence. He felt happy beyond measure to meet Vaswaniji in Calcutta. At once he invited Vaswaniji to visit Nadia.

Nadia is situated on the bank of the holy Bhagirathi (Ganges) river. Before Nimai (Sri Chaitanya) was born, Nadia was famous as a centre of learning; its people devoted most of their time to the pursuit of knowledge. The intense thirst of its people for knowledge lent a peculiar character to the town, distinguishing it from other towns in the world.

At one time, Nadia, perhaps, was the most intellectually advanced place in the world. The banks of the river Bhagirathi would be lined every morn with thousands of Brahmins, absorbed in worship of the Divine. At sunset, these highly intellectual men once again would repair to the banks of the river and meditate upon the nature of the soul and the mystery that is God. The bed of the Bhagirathi would be covered with flowers offered by the intellectual aspirants at morn as well as at eve.

Nimai was born in Nadia at a time when the town had attainted the zenith of its intellectual eminence. He came to proclaim to the people of Nadia that the aim of human existence was the realisation of God. Not argumentation or intellectual achievement but the realisation of the Self was the real purpose of human life. Had not Socrates, the sage of Greece, too, declared: "Know thyself"?

To know one's self is to dive deep within and to discover the inner Self, the hidden Self. To know the inner Self is to know the Divine. Vaswaniji once said: "When consciousness is heightened and the Self is seen as the King of all, the empirical, the material, the objective vanishes, and you pass into the peace of liberation." It is this peace of liberation that Sri Chaitanya brought to the people of Nadia. No wonder Nadia soon became a centre of Nimai's new bhakti movement and sweet sounds of kirtan and Hari Nama could be heard emanating from almost every house.

Vaswaniji and his group stayed as guests of Govind Babu.

News of the arrival of Vaswaniji, the holy man from Sind, spread swiftly from street to street and from house to house. People in large numbers flocked to the house of Govind Babu for Vaswaniji's darshan.

"What is my name?" Vaswaniji inquired of some simple-minded sisters who came to him and sought his blessings. "Sadhu Vaswaniji," they replied. Vaswaniji in turn smiled and said: "My name is Nimai Das." This new name appealed so greatly to the women-folk that they repeated these words over and over again: "Nimai Das hath come to Nadia." In reality it was not Nimaidas, a servant, a sevak of Nimai, but a Nimai-bhakta, a devotee of Nimai, who had blessed Nadia with his presence in the form of Vaswaniji. Some even went so far as to proclaim that Nimai himself had returned to Nadia true to his promise. At the time of leaving Nadia for Puri, Nimai had said: "I will come again."

Govind Babu managed a school and a college in Nadia. He took Vaswaniji to the school the very first day. The pupils greeted Vaswaniji as Sadhu Baba. The next day he was invited to Sri Chaitanya Temple to give a discourse. The Temple was thronged with sisters and brothers. On entering, Vaswaniji stood in utmost reverence before the statue of Sri Chaitanya which adorned the Temple.

A hush fell upon the audience when Vaswaniji rose to speak. In pindrop silence the people of Nadia listened to him. They fell under the magic spell of his words. Great was the outburst of enthusiasm as they expressed their gratitude to Govind Babu for having invited Vaswaniji to Nadia.

The following day Vaswaniji spoke on Sri Ramakrishna in the Ramakrishna Math. The disciples of Ramakrishna were reminded of their Master even as they heard Vaswaniji, who spoke not merely with fluency but with feeling about the Saint of Dakshineshwar, just as several years ago he had written about him with feeling. This is what he wrote about Sri Ramakrishna:

How often have I not looked at the picture of Sri Ramakrishna! How often have I not meditated upon him and his sayings! Some years ago I saw Belur Math. I saw some of the things which Ramakrishna had used and which his disciples have treasured. And gazing at the picture of the Saint, I said to myself: "I have seen the face of a child!"

The people of Nadia became attached to Vaswaniji and would not permit him to leave them when he expressed a desire to return to Calcutta. Vaswaniji, in turn, admired the people of Nadia for their wonderful devotion and stayed on for two days longer just to please them. He was deeply impressed by what he beheld there.

Not a single house in the whole of Nadia was without a statue of Lord Krishna. The whole of Nadia reverberated with sounds of devotional singing, kirtan songs and of peals of bells. "Hare Krishna, Hare Ram, Nitai Gaur, Radhe Shyam," were the words sung over and over again.

Vaswaniji paid a visit to the Vidyasagar College before leaving Nadia. When the last day dawned, Bengali girls organised a farewell function in Vaswaniji's honour. The people of Nadia shed tears as they bade farewell. Govind Babu's daughter, Rekha, burst into sobs and would not let Vaswaniji depart. Profuse

tears flowed from her eyes. Vaswaniji tried to comfort the grief-stricken girl. "Child! I am a wanderer, a wayfarer and may not stay long at one place. I will think of you and bless you, wherever I be," he said.

A Pandit, a man of scholarship and learning, came to meet Vaswaniji in Nadia. He had studied scriptures and spoke with an air of superiority. Vaswaniji listened patiently to all that the Pandit had to say, without speaking a single word. At last the Pandit realised that Vaswaniji had not opened his lips, while he had done all the talking. So he asked Vaswaniji to say something.

Vaswaniji, with his characteristic humility, said: "You are a ship of learning. I am a *murkha*. I know not much. I know only this that the Lord is my All and that I aspire to be His servant."

Deeply touched by Vaswaniji's few, simple, yet profound words, the Pandit, now subdued, said meekly: "I feel so small in your presence. I have, no doubt, read several books. But I have not been blessed with a vision (*darshan*) of the Light. I see only darkness."

Vaswaniji listened to the Pandit and said: "We shall know and we shall behold the Light when these eyes of ours are touched with the dust of humility."

Vaswaniji came back to Calcutta and soon decided to return to Sind. But before he left Calcutta, a huge reception was held in his honour by the Sindhi Association where a purse was also presented to him.

While in Calcutta, Vaswaniji had been invited to the Satya Ashrama. His visit to the Ashrama was indeed memorable and I close this chapter with a description of this visit.

The Satya Ashrama, situated in a quiet corner of Calcutta, worked under the guidance and inspiration of Sadhu Tara Charan. His disciples, out of love, devotion and reverence for him, called him "Sadhu Baba". Sadhu Vaswaniji of Sind went to meet the Sadhu Baba of Bengal.

Sadhu Tara Charan could speak only a few words

of English as he had not received English education. But highly educated people came to this simple villager to receive his blessings. Staunch devotee of truth as the Sadhu Baba was, his disciples believed that if their gurudev uttered a statement concerning future events, it certainly would come true. Sadhu Baba was a *satyavadi* as he had never spoken an untruth in his life. Sadhu Baba and Vaswaniji embraced each other with infinite tenderness while the disciples of both looked on. The saint of Bengal greeted the sage of Sind, yet did not both belong to the One Divine Brotherhood and therefore were not strangers to each other?

Vaswaniji spoke at the Satya Ashrama for half an hour upon the disciplines necessary for the attainment of truth. Sadhu Baba and his disciples listened in rapt attention. Then Sadhu Baba sprung a surprise upon all those present by getting up and saying: "Never before have I heard a man speak as Vaswaniji has spoken this day. Never before have I met anyone whom I could call 'Satya Acharya', which means 'Teacher of Truth'. In behalf of our Ashrama, the Satya Ashrama, I confer upon Vaswaniji the title of 'Satya Acharya'." He then placed in Vaswaniji's hands a gold medal.

Vaswaniji smiled as he said: "Titles are chains and gold is but yellow dust. If at any time you think of me, remember me as a wanderer of the Lord."

That night, Vaswaniji's thoughts turned to Sadhu Baba, the picture of truth. To the few sisters and brothers seated before him Vaswaniji spoke on Truth and how it should be worshipped. He referred to Satyakama and Gautama. He also referred to Muhammad and the words the latter spoke to his old uncle, Abu Talib.

"If you were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would not swerve from the Truth. God will teach me to stand for Truth or give me death!" declared Muhammad.

And Vaswaniji, a staunch devotee of Truth, added:

"Yes—Truth, though the way be covered with flaming fires! Truth, though its services be agony, persecution, prison or the scaffold.

"Truth,—or death! But where are they who would tread the way of Truth?"

Labourer in the Lord's Vineyard

On 29 March 1945, a large crowd of admirers collected at the Howrah station to see off Vaswaniji. Many had brought with themselves baskets of fruits, garlands and boquets of flowers.

Vaswaniji was leaving Calcutta for Varanasi on his way to Sind. He halted for a few days at Varanasi where he had been invited to participate in the birthday celebrations of Sadhu Tara Charan. On the appointed day Vaswaniji joined in the celebrations. Sadhu Tara Charan and Sadhu Vaswani greeted each other with unusual warmth.

In Varanasi, Vaswaniji also paid a visit to the Kabir Temple. He had great reverence for Saint Kabir as the following poem, which he once wrote, depicts:—

KABIR WORKING AT HIS LOOM

Your heart was like a large bunyan tree,
On whose branches sat innumerable singing birds;
And they flew to the East and they flew to the West,
Singing of the unstruck music of the depth,
Which our deaf ears do not hear,
And of the light which our dim eyes do not see,
For they are veiled with the veils of passion and
pride.

Your songs were sung to the Man in every man
Who dwells in the land where life is forever young
And the season is always spring!
Your songs, O Master Singer! will live forever
In the sleepless memory of mankind.

In Varanasi, Vaswaniji also met Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the founder of the Banaras Hindu University. Panditji was confined to bed in those days. When Vaswaniji met Panditji, the founder of the Hindu University requested the founder of the Mira Movement to pay a visit once a year to the Banaras Hindu University and address the faculty and students who had much to learn from him.

Vaswaniji and Panditji had been acquainted with each other for years. When Panditji founded the Banaras Hindu University, he had invited Vaswaniji to become a member of the staff. Vaswaniji, who was then working as Principal of the Mahendra College, Patiala, had declined the invitation.

Now that Vaswaniji was in Varanasi he was requested to address a meeting of the professors and students of the Banaras Hindu University. Questions were put to him at the close of the meeting.

In answer to a question, Vaswaniji said: "The centre point of knowledge is not the mind but the heart. The mind moves in delusions. The heart has a vision of the One!"

In answer to another question, he said: "The mind separates, the mind divides. For the mind proceeds by the method of comparison and contrast. Walk the way of unity, seeing all things in the One!"

Vaswaniji also visited the Vishwanath Temple where stands the huge statúe of Vishwamber or Lord Shiva.

From Varanasi, Vaswaniji paid a brief visit to Sarnath, which is a centre of Buddhist culture and learning. Twenty five centuries ago, Gautama Buddha, after receiving enlightenment, had given his first sermon to the five bhikkhus here, thus setting in motion the Wheel of Dhamma. A beautiful Temple

has been erected on the spot where the Buddha delivered his first message apparently to the five bhikkhus but in reality to the world at large. Several bhikkhus whose hearts hunger for peace and whose souls yearn for *nirvana* make their abode in this Temple.

In Sarnath at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, Vaswaniji delivered a lecture on "Buddha's Message to the Nations". Among others, the High Priest of the Chinese Temple and a few Chinese pilgrims were present at the meeting. Also present were some bhikkhus from Ceylon.

In the course of his talk, Vaswaniji said:

"The world has wandered from violence to violence. The nations stand arrayed in opposing camps. Out of competition cometh hate, and out of hate is born war. Civilisation lies broken and bleeding. Its hope is in the mighty message of the love that conquers hate."

Vaswaniji went round the different institutions at Sarnath including the Chinese Buddhist Temple and the Mulagandhakuti Library. He felt interested in the Maha Bodhi High School which blended the ancient with the modern.

Varanasi was getting hotter day by day. Vaswaniji suffered from inflammation of the eyes. So he decided to leave for Hyderabad. He had earlier planned to spend a few days in Lahore and Rohri on his way to Hyderabad where many eager hearts awaited his arrival. But the idea of halting at Lahore and Rohri was dropped as the oppressive heat there would have aggravated his eye-trouble.

Hyderabad gave a warm welcome to Vaswaniji. The fellowship meetings soon gathered in strength now that Vaswaniji was there. The ashramites rejoiced to have in their midst the beloved of their hearts.

The Second World War was still on in the year 1945. Inflation was getting out of control and prices of groceries and other commodities were soaring high. There was scarcity of food grains and sugar. Vaswaniji's heart bled for the people for whom life was becoming

a struggle. He appealed to the Collector for permission to supply food-stuffs in the homes of Hyderabad. Gangaram Sajandas and Chellaram Lalvani devoted a part of the day to this social work and went about from door to door supplying scarce commodities. People of Hyderabad greatly appreciated this act of Vaswaniji and showered blessings upon him and his work.

The Mira Education Board had acquired in Hirabad a plot of land admeasuring 54,000 sq. ft. for the construction of a building for the Mira schools. Vaswaniji instructed Gangaram Sajandas to undertake the construction work of the school building.

The Second World War had not yet ended and there was scarcity of cement and other building materials. The government had clamped down controls on these materials. Free market prices had become very exorbitant. Many a construction work had come to a stop owing to the non-availability or very high cost of building materials.

In view of the shortage of materials, the very idea of undertaking such a huge construction job would have been unthinkable in those days. Besides, the Mira Education Board had no financial resources to meet the cost of construction. But since Vaswaniji gave instructions that the work be started, Gangaram, who has always had utmost faith in the Master's words, girded up his loins for the stupendous task.

Soon the plans for the building were ready and Gangaram started in right earnest the work of collection of funds to meet the cost of construction. He had a very busy time for nearly two and a half years as he had often to go out of Hyderabad on collection work, and to meet government officials of various departments for sanctions and permits. Gangaram managed, side by side, to attend to his routine work of school and satsang, whenever he was in Hyderabad.

In the construction work of the Mira Building, Gangaram was especially helped by Naraindas Dharamdas, ex-President, Hyderabad-Sind Municipality,

who gave a lot of time and attention to supervising the work. The building was ready for occupation in 1945. It was indeed a fine structure which came up.

This year Dr. Radhakrishnan paid a visit to Sind and presided over the Annual Function of St. Mira's High School at Hyderabad. Dr. Arundale had visited the school in the previous year when the Mira Building was under construction. When Dr. Radhakrishnan came, the new building was ready. The annual function this year veritably became a 'feast of culture and inspiration', in the presence of Dr. Radhakrishnan and Vaswaniji in the tastefully decorated shamiana.

Two noble sons of India, who were the shining stars in the firmament of India's culture, met on this occasion. Both had put forth their best efforts to spread the message of rishis and saints, seers and sages, poets and prophets of India.

Vaswaniji greeted the distinguished guest in his soft, melodious voice and paid him a glowing tribute in these words:

"Your name, Sir, has run round the world as an honoured, an illuminated, an inspired apostle of Indian culture. You have written many books on philosophy and religion. But with your one book in two volumes, this one great book on Indian Philosophy, sweeping up centuries of Indian thought and synthesis, with this one book surveying the whole world of Indian culture, you, Sir, have stirred groups of thinkers in East and West. Methinks the spirit of an ancient Rishi broods over the book and I hear in it the voice of a new hope, a new strength, a new inspiration for my beloved but broken Motherland."

Throwing light upon the ideals of the Mira School, Vaswaniji spoke of the dream in his eyes of the day when men and women would come to St. Mira's as to a shrine and coming there, would bless the name of St. Mira as one of the great ones of Indian History. St. Mira's songs, he said, could help in unfolding a new renaissance of culture in India. This new culture, as he thought of it, had seven notes,—manual work,

knowledge, simplicity, purity, courage, service and concentration.

When Vaswaniji finished speaking and got down from the stage, Dr. Radhakrishnan at once went forward and enveloped him in a warm embrace, while the audience looked on in admiration.

Dr. Radhakrishnan then delivered his presidential address.

"My first privilege, today," he said, "is to thank most cordially Sadhu Vaswani for his affectionate words of welcome and his inspiring message. This institution bears a name sacred to Indian history and illuminated by the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of the seven notes of Indian culture, which Sadhu Vaswaniji just gave us. All these seven notes are incarnated in the life-work of Sadhu Vaswani and this institution is, therefore, blessed in the true sense of the term, in having his wealth of the spirit and his remarkable renunciation. His inspiring message I shall not forget as long as I am alive."

Copiously quoting from the *shastras*, Dr. Radhakrishnan spoke in rapturous terms of the glorious heritage of Indian womanhood. In moving terms he spoke of India's greatness and India's world-mission.

Vaswaniji performed the opening ceremony of the Mira Building in 1946. A yagna was held on that day.

Vaswaniji was requested to stay on the new premises, but he declined, saying that he was happy in his simple old nest, the Nam Nagar.

It was in this simple old nest that Vaswaniji's niece, Sundri, who lived in Karachi, came to seek his blessings. She had stood first at the M. Sc. examination of the University of Bombay in 1944 and was consequently awarded a scholarship to pursue studies for Ph. D. at London. She proceeded to U. K. in 1946 and secured a doctorate in Mathematical Statistics. She was the first Indian lady to have become a Ph. D. of the University of London in this subject. Vaswaniji blessed Sundri abundantly before her departure to the

West and prophesied a bright and glowing future for her.

Vaswaniji left for Karachi after sometime. Because of his presence many more sisters and brothers started attending the morning and evening fellowship meetings in the Krishta Kunj. Sati Mirchandani, a devotee of Guru Nanak and Sri Krishna, used to sing in the Hyderabad satsang. She had secured a job in Karachi and started attending the satsang in the Krishta Kunj. She thrilled the hearts of the Karachi satsangis.

Vaswaniji, who had always been a lover of song and music, would at times feel so charmed that he would ask Dr. Sati to sing songs, one after another, for hours together. He would lose all count of time while listening to the devotional songs she sang. Dr. Sati's joy lay only in this that Vaswaniji was delighted to hear her songs. In fact she brought tears to the eyes of innumerable people who also heard her in the satsang.

Dr. Hashmatrai Thadhani, an active member of the Karachi satsang, had to undergo an operation. Dr. Thadhani and his wife, Gopi, were anxious that Vaswaniji should be present at the Hospital at the time of operation as they felt all would go well in his presence. At 12 noon, the appointed hour, Vaswaniji went to the Nursing Home and remained there till the operation was over and Dr. Thadhani was brought back to his room.

That very night the Krishta Kunj became astir as Vaswaniji vomited blood and fell unconscious. A neighbouring doctor, after examining him, declared his condition to be quite serious. Other doctors were called in for consultation. In the meanwhile, Vaswaniji recovered consciousness and seeing anguish writ large upon the faces of those around him asked them not to be nervous. "Life is in God's hands. Therefore, be not disheartened," he spoke by way of consolation.

Dr. Pamnani and Dr. Tolani, both eminent doctors, attended on Vaswaniji. Dr. Pamnani, alarmed by the serious condition, spent the night in the Krishta

Kunj. He and other devotees sat up the whole night.

Vaswaniji developed ulcer trouble. He was confined to bed for days together. But even on his sick-bed, he listened to devotional singing and *sankirtan*. Dr. Sati would spend most of her time in the Krishta Kunj in order to sing devotional songs in Vaswaniji's presence.

Vaswaniji believed that a person who surrenders himself utterly to God should take it that in times of sickness God speaks to the patient through doctors, and that in such times one should follow the instructions of a physician. The doctors' word was therefore God's word to him. So he abided by their instructions. As he had developed ulcer trouble, doctors advised him complete rest for four weeks. This meant that Vaswaniji would not go down from his room on the first floor to the Satsang Hall to give discourses during this period. A way therefore had to be found so that the satsangis would not be deprived of the opportunity of listening to Vaswaniji's inspiring discourses.

Jashan found out a solution to the problem by giving Vaswaniji a microphone by his bedside. The mike was connected with the loudspeakers in the hall downstairs. A thrill of joy ran through the hall when Vaswaniji's voice was first heard. Vaswaniji gave several discourses in this manner.

The news of Vaswaniji's illness reached Hyderabad and even Upper Sind. Some devotees soon rushed to Karachi.

Vaswaniji was permitted to move about freely after a month. Dr. Thadhani, too, came home from the hospital on the same day. This strange coincidence made everyone believe that Vaswaniji had taken upon himself the physical suffering of Dr. Thadhani. Saints often bear upon themselves the burden of suffering meant for their disciples.

Vaswaniji would later suffer repetitively from ulcer trouble. As for attacks of gout there would be no end. Saint Gurmukh Singh of the Punjab often would tell

Vaswaniji's devotees that Vaswaniji suffered physical pain because he gave healing water to the sick and thus bore upon his shoulders the burden of the *karma* of the sick persons. Parents and relatives of the sick and afflicted would often take from Vaswaniji water blessed by him. The magnetised water worked wonders in several cases. A healing force went out of Vaswaniji as he blessed the water brought to him. In the measure in which he healed others, he himself suffered physically. He would at times suffer from such excruciating pain that the sight for several of his devotees was simply unbearable. But from the lips of the healer ever escaped the words: "Wahguru! Shukkur!" meaning "All that happens is for the best. Gratitude to Thee, O Master of Mercy!"

If Vaswaniji bore upon himself the physical suffering of his devotees, he also inflicted punishment upon himself when he saw his devotees succumbing to vice and sin. The guru's grace and love know no bounds, no limits. As a mother pours her love upon her prodigal child, even so does the guru shower love upon his disciples, however wayward and rebellious they become, and suffers on their behalf. The guru, the very picture of tender compassion and love, suffers for them. How often did not Vaswaniji literally play the part of the loving father and mother to his prodigal disciples when they returned to him by forgiving them and bestowing his love upon them! It is likely Vaswaniji suffered from ill-health because he was forbearing and kind. In his mercy, he could not bear the misery of those dear to him. In the attempt to raise the dwarfed to godly stature, and to lead the astray to their lost paradise, Vaswaniji's health often deteriorated.

Jotumal Harchandrai had started a Mira Primary School in Larkana, in Upper Sind. Vaswaniji was repeatedly requested by Jotumal to visit Larkana and bless the school. Bhagwandas Nandusing, who had started Mira Schools in Rohri and Sukkur, was also pressing Vaswaniji to come and bless the schools personally.

Vaswaniji therefore left Karachi on 8 March 1946 for Hyderabad on his way to Upper Sind. He stayed in Hyderabad for eleven days and proceeded to Rohri, accompanied by Jashan, Sati and Shantri. I followed the group to Rohri after a few days.

Vaswaniji was visiting Rohri after a period of five years. For five years had the staff and students of the Rohri Mira School and the people of Rohri longed for his arrival. Their hearts throbbed with emotion as the train by which he travelled came into sight at the platform on March 19. Shouts of "Jai Jai!" meaning "victory", filled the air. The crowd caught up the contagion and took up the cry, which like a mighty wave rose heavenward. He was garlanded profusely on behalf of several organisations. The Mira girls gave him a guard of honour. He was then led in a quarter-mile procession through the bazaar and streets of Rohri to the house of Bhagwandas, his host.

The Rohri Mira School had organised for the occasion a function at which Vaswaniji was presented a purse of Rs. 8,000. He at once passed on the amount to the school for educational activities.

During the course of his speech, Vaswaniji said to the students: "The end of knowledge is service of the poor. Do not imitate the wealth-weary West, but be true to your spiritual light and you will build a new, vital nation."

Vaswaniji was invited to several places in Rohri as all the people knew him very well. If Vaswaniji was greeted everywhere reverentially, the sentences on the lips of all were full of reproach, for they said: "How could you stay away from us for five years? How could you forget us for all this time? Now that you have come back at last, we will not leave you for quite sometime."

Vaswaniji's reply to each was even this: "I am a pedlar, a hawker that keeps moving about from one place to another. A wayfarer may not remain at one and the same place for long. I sing the Name of the

Lord and ask others also to chant the Name Divine. To you, too, I bring this message: Chant the Name Divine and serve the poor!"

The blessed town of Rohri is the birth place of *dervishes* and *fakirs* such as Beydil and Bekas and is well-known for the Temple of Sai Vasanram.

To some of the people who asked Vaswaniji what gift they should offer him, he said: "I need naught else save the songs of your Poet-Saints."

When someone mentioned about this to Sai Rochaldas, a dervish of Rohri, he invited Vaswaniji to his place, where Jara Bhagat, the well-known singer of Rohri, was asked to sing songs of *dervishes* and *fakirs* the whole night. Vaswaniji, Sai Rochaldas and other devotees listened to the songs of love and devotion, which were being sung to the accompaniment of music, throughout the night.

The refrain of one of the songs Jara Bhagat sang was:

O Lord! if Thou didst love create,
Why didst Thou create the sorrow of separation?

The words of the song were so moving and the voice of the singer so melodious that the eyes of Vaswaniji, Sai Rochaldas and others present were touched with tears.

The next day this question was put to Vaswaniji: "Why doth the lover suffer the sorrow of separation from the Beloved?" He replied: "Separation purifies and prepares the heart for the rich harvest of love."

Vaswaniji visited the shrines of Beydil and Bekas and sought the blessings of these Poet-Saints, who were both Prophets of the Beautiful and had, in Vaswaniji's words, "beheld the Universe robed in Beauty". He also went to Sai Vasanram's Temple and gave a discourse.

A public address was presented to Vaswaniji in Rohri on March 23.

After staying in Rohri for seven days, Vaswaniji moved on to Sukkur. He presided over the Annual

Function of St. Mira's School and was presented a purse of Rs. 5,000. He passed on the entire amount to Sukkur Mira School in aid of the school activities.

Forty associations of Sukkur—religious, social, political, educational, cultural and journalistic—presented a joint address to "Sadhu Vaswani". In reply he said that he was not a sadhu but a wanderer of the Lord and had come to them with the one word in his heart: "Awake!"

The people of Sukkur were visibly moved to hear these words. They attended the meetings he addressed and listened in breathless silence to his lectures and discourses. They could not help commenting: "He speaks in the same ringing voice and utters the same words of wisdom he once uttered in the past and held us spellbound. The same spring of love still flows from his heart from which we may drink and slake our thirst. He has not changed a bit."

Verily, saints remain unaffected by the ravages of time, by the ever-changing moods of seasons. The love they hold in their hearts grows on the contrary evermore with the passage of years. Love, like blood, circulates unhindered in their veins. Saints breathe in love and breathe out love. To the children of the earth they give limitless love. Even as the river spontaneously flows towards the sea, even as it is natural for birds to spread their wings and soar in the heavens on high, even as flowers do naught but waft their fragrance to the wind, even as the moon cannot help but reflect the light of the sun, so do saints spread the sunshine of love.

From Sukkur Vaswaniji went to Larkana. The whole town became astir, as festive and gay as on the occasion of Deepavali, for the beloved of their hearts was in their midst once again.

Huge meetings were organised in Larkana which were addessed by Vaswaniji. He passed on the message of his Master to eager, receptive hearts. When he took leave of them they cried as if in one voice: "Go not yet away from us! Most dearly beloved are you to

our hearts and brief hath been your visit here. Our eyes have hungered for a glimpse of your face, our hearts are athirst for a drink of your love and our souls long for the wine of your wisdom. Tarry a little longer."

Once again Vaswaniji said: "I am a pilgrim that moves on in quest. With a wounded heart I wander about and pass on my Master's message to waiting hearts. How may I stay at one place for long? I am a labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, a labourer that needs must toil day and night."

The eyes of the people were dimmed with tears and they became speechless. How could they argue with one whose heart bled within him? Lest their words might hurt him, they remained silent.

Vaswaniji then proceeded to Shikarpur. He was visiting this place after eleven years. While the people of Shikarpur rejoiced to have him back in their midst, the self-same cry was on their lips, the cry that he had forgotten them. A number of associations organised huge meetings, which Vaswaniji addressed. It was a crowded program that Vaswaniji went through. "Build ye your lives on the rock of recollection and compassion and thus fulfil the mission of life," said he wherever he went.

Shikarpur is the birthplace of the well-known Brahmagnani, Bhai Chainrai, whose *nom-de-plume* is Sa'ami (the Master). His slokas (verses) are rich in contribution to the thought of humanity as they contain a treasure of the wisdom of Vedanta.

Concerning Sa'ami, Vaswaniji says: "In him the lyrical is blended with the mystical. The ever recurring aspiration of his poetry is,—living union with the One. In a number of slokas he gives expression to the thought that there is a procession moving on! History is a 'procession of pilgrims, of wayfarers.' "

Vaswaniji visited the spot once sanctified by the living presence of Sa'ami and invoked his blessings. He was pained to see that a single, solitary earthen lamp kept burning on a windowsill in memory of

on this sacred occasion and langar (fellowship-meals) was organised on a mass scale. The Mira Schools staged a variety entertainment in honour of the revered founder. A purse of Rs. 1,23,000 was presented at this function presided over by Dr. Hiranand.

From this year on Vaswaniji's birthday celebrations would become an annual feature and huge amounts would be collected from thousands of his devotees and admirers for purse presentation. Vaswaniji would pass on the entire amounts to the Governing Body of the Satsang for use in the multifarious activities conducted under its auspices.

Vaswaniji passed on the entire amount this time to Sakhi Satsang Association with a request that it be utilised for the construction of Sri Gita Mandir on the newly acquired plot of 18,000 sq. feet. A guest house, a modikhana and a library also were to be attached to the Gita Mandir, a centre dedicated to the cause of spreading the message of the Bhagavad Gita.

After thanking all who had contributed to the purse, Vaswaniji proceeded to indicate that the mission of the Gita Mandir would not be fulfilled until out of its soil grew two flowers of courage and service. He said:

"The Gita is a call, a heroic call to action. For there is evil in the world; there are dark stains to be washed out; there are dark forces to be overcome. The Gita calls us to stand bravely on the battle-field of life and fight those who make life harsh and cruel for their fellows. They also serve who, with hand and heart and body and blood, resist wrong and the wrong doer."

Vaswaniji closed his speech on this note:

"The Gita urges upon us all to bear witness to the great ideal of service and sacrifice. The proposed Gita Mandir must become a centre of the poor, the lowly and the lost."

At the Shrine of Shah Latif

World War II ended in 1946 and in the elections that followed in England the Labour Party headed by C. R. Attlee came into power. As this party was more receptive to Indian aspirations, the Labour Government began to focus their attention on the Indian problem.

The two major political parties of India—the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League — could not see eye to eye and the Muslim League pressed its demand for a homeland for Muslims. After many a conference between the Congress, the Muslim League and the representatives of the Government, jointly and severally, the establishment of a state of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims was accepted.

With Hindus and Muslims rioting in several cities in various parts of India, it was felt that with the the establishment of Pakistan, most of the Muslim population would converge on that State and communal peace would prevail on the sub-continent.

The establishment of Pakistan, however, failed to solve the problem. On the contrary it opened up Pandora's box. Millions became refugees overnight in the wake of partition and the consequent migration of Hindus from the territory of Pakistan and of Muslims

to Pakistan. Fierce riots broke out in several cities and towns where Hindus and Muslims lived side by side. Communal feelings gripped the minds of many a Hindu and Muslim. The flare up in the feelings often resulted in loss of life and property and created horror in the mind of the local minority community. There was violence in the air.

Vaswaniji felt deeply grieved at the pattern of behaviour of Hindus and Muslims. He was a friend of both the communities. If Hindus worshipped him as a saint, Muslims regarded him as a *dervish.* Both Hindus and Muslims sought his blessings.

In those days of confusion and lawlessness, Vaswaniji all of a sudden decided to pay a visit to Bhit, where stands the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif. Every Friday night *fakirs* and *sufis*—men of God—assembled there, kept vigil and sang songs of the Poet-Saint.

Who can say why Vaswaniji decided to pay a visit to Bhit at this critical time? He took with himself Jashan for his sole companion.

The journey to Bhit from Hyderabad was by train upto Hala Station from where one had to trudge the distance by tonga.

Vaswaniji and Jashan reached Hala Station at night and no tongawalla would consent to take them to Bhit at that hour of the night as the way was tortuous and wound through a forest which was far from safe. At last a tongawalla, after much persuasion, agreed to take them. He drove them in pitch darkness.

On reaching Bhit, Vaswaniji and Jashan joined in the vigil observed by a crowd of about a thousand men, women and children. They listened to the songs that were being sung. In the morning they went around the Bhit and saw the imposing tomb which enshrines the Poet-Saint's body.

"No spot in Sind can be more sacred than this Bhit in the Desert, where stands the shrine of the Poet-Saint. And I dream of a day when men will come from East and West on a pilgrimage to this Tomb as

to a shrine of a world-sage and a world-poet," wrote Vaswaniji later.

Vaswaniji always held Shah Latif in high esteem. He regarded him as one of the five Master-poets, the Pancharatnas, the 'Five Jewels' of Sindhi literature. To him Shah Latif was not a provincial poet but a world-poet with a world-message.

In his address at the U. N. E. S. C. O. celebration day meeting held in Hyderabad-Sind in 1946, Vaswaniji had quoted Shah Latif.

During the course of his address he said:

"Europe, tired and spent in strength at the close of World War I, seemed to desire peace and so established a 'League of Nations'. But the builders built on sand, not solid ground. The League of Nations proved to be like the house the man, in the Biblical story, built on sand. And rains fell and floods came and storms arose and the house crumbled to its fall!

"An explosion quickly shook the ends of the earth. The explosion was World War II. At its close, today, there is a talk again of world-peace; and so we hear of an organisation for union of nations and the cultures of nations. In my heart there are doubts as to the success of these new efforts at world-peace; for the new 'Union' of the nations has excluded Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain."

According to Vaswaniji the three things essential to create conditions for an enduring world-peace were (1) fellowship (2) spirit of service (3) new vision of life as a movement upward.

Towards the close of his speech he said: "Worship God with life. This is religion. This, too, is culture. As our Sindhi poet, Shah Latif, the uncrowned king of Sind, says in one of his stirring poems:—

'A wayfarer is everyone:
There is not one who may say,
The earth belongs to me!'

"In pursuit of material welfare let not the nations deprive themselves of the spiritual wealth of life. So may the nations come together to build a peace, a

brotherhood, a fellowship for which humanity has cried for centuries. So may the nations build together and together march on to reach the Divine Goal of life!"

(From "Excelsior!": Vol. VII, No.1)

It was the year 1947 and Vaswaniji was in Hyderabad. He continued to suffer from gout. The heat in April was oppressive. Kaka Chellaram Mirani, a devoted worker, usually interested people in Vaswaniji's literature. This time he took Vaswaniji's blessings and set out on a different mission. The new mission was to arouse the interest of parents of girls in Mira School. Kaka Chellaram never returned back. His feet slipped while climbing a staircase. He fell down and became unconscious. Though he was rushed to the hospital and given all possible medical aid, he did not recover consciousness. He breathed his last in the hospital on 13 April 1947.

Vaswaniji paid a touching tribute to this devoted, selfless worker, who expired while performing his duty, while serving the blessed cause of St. Mira's. Blessed was Kaka Chellaram!

Vaswaniji's gout grew worse and he was advised to go to Karachi for a change of climate. His feet, hands and shoulders were swollen and he could not move his head. He, who was a channel of healing for others, would get relief from his own suffering by chanting the Name Divine and uttering *vani*.

At Karachi, Vaswaniji stayed with Durgdas Punjabi, a businessman whose whole family was devoted to him. The Punjabis served Vaswaniji with immense love. Dr. Naraindas Mirchandani, the family doctor of Durgdas, treated Vaswaniji, and the doctor too was thus drawn towards him.

Vaswaniji's health gradually improved. He and his group moved to Krishta Kunj, after having stayed with Durgdas for nearly a month. Krishta Kunj once again hummed with activity. Fellowship meetings were held twice everyday.

Hindus of Sind at this time had to pass through a trying period. In the whole of India, Sind was the only province having common border with India which, in its entirety, was included in Pakistan. The other two provinces—the Punjab and Bengal—were partitioned. But such was not the case with Sind.

Muslims from various parts of India started pouring into Sind, and tensions between the Hindus of Sind and the immigrants flared up. The Hindus felt that their future in Pakistan was insecure and they started liquidating their assets to migrate to India. Hindus of Sind lost peace of mind. Some of them disposed off their property at depressed rates and left the land of their birth and moved to India. Yet others, who still were undecided, waited and watched for events to shape themselves.

Karachi was to be the capital of Pakistan. So to it immigrated in large numbers Muslims from various parts of India to settle down there. New faces were seen in every nook and corner of the metropolis.

During this period riots broke out in Noakhali District of Bengal, at the other end of India where Hindus, who were in a majority, savagely attacked Muslims and destroyed their life and property. As a reaction, Muslims in some towns of Bihar, where they were in majority, attacked Hindus. Rivers of blood flowed freely in Bengal and Bihar.

Vaswaniji was grieved to learn of the dreadful riots. He, who had sought to radiate the light of love and compassion, felt sad to see that human beings had descended to the level of beasts and made savage attacks and counter-attacks. He, who craved for peace within and without, felt sad to find madness and violence in the air. He felt that the Name of God alone could give solace to the people in distress. With a saddened heart he wrote to his devotees in Hyderabad to hold aloft the banner of satsang in the critical days through which they were passing. He bade them to be unafraid and to turn their thoughts to God who was the Great Protector.

The poison of hatred had by this time permeated into the vitals of Sind. Hindus of Sind now lived in daily dread. Several of them sent away their women-folk and children to India. At times, Muslim refugees broke into Hindu homes and looted property. Vaswaniji kept himself behind closed doors day after day for hours together and prayed that the misguided be granted light to move out of the dark and devious paths, to overcome the feelings of envy and hatred which had gripped their minds and to rise above the passions which hissed and tossed in their hearts like venomous snakes.

Several Hindus in the interior of Sind disposed off their real estate and other possessions at rock-bottom rates and hurriedly left their native province for various parts of India by the first available passage.

As the day of Independence came nearer, India became a raging furnace. With the establishment of Pakistan on 14 August 1947, India was broken into two states—India and Pakistan. The transfer of power in India took place on the night of August 15.

What atrocities were not committed in the name of freedom! People were massacred in the name of freedom! The chastity of women-folk was assailed in the name of freedom! Homes were looted, burnt and broken, husbands were made to part from their wives, married women became widows, parents were separated from their offsprings and children became orphans! All this in the name of freedom! This reminds one of Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France, who when sent to the guillotine at the time of the French Revolution, cried out: "O Freedom! What crimes are committed in thy name!"

Vaswaniji's heart wept within him to see the tragedy and tears that engulfed the subcontinent. He had always preached love and brotherliness But the situation that prevailed then was the very negation of his hopes and aspirations.

Referring to it, he wrote later:

I saw the infuriated mob. I saw the illiterate crowd. And I said: "If knowledge is power, is not ignorance, too, a power—a destructive power like that of an *asura*, a giant who pulls down and tears to pieces and burns to ashes the work of centuries of civilisation?"

On 15 August 1947 when there were great celebrations all over the country, Vaswaniji was asked to give a message during which he said:

"May we bear witness to true freedom through our lives. May the nations be united and happy. Many, alas, cry that they are unhappy. My humble request to each government is even this: Forget not the minorities, but spend your lives in their service. The widows and the orphans, uprooted from their native soil, wander about as refugees. Sadness dwells within my heart. Celebrate ye the Independence Day with enthusiasm. But permit me to remain in my room and offer this prayer: O Master of Mercy! Be kind to the Hindus and Muslims alike and let them be happy!"

Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, too, remained aloof from the Independence Day celebrations. While there was pomp and pageantry in New Delhi, where all the leaders had collected to join in the celebrations, this noblest son of India was hundreds of miles away from the scene, trying to bring peace to the riot-stricken Bengal. He had not the heart to join in the Independence Day celebrations. He observed the day by fasting and spinning; he offered prayers and listened to a recitation of the Bhagavad Gita.

Those who came to Vaswaniji for solace and consolation, he inspired them with courage and faith by saying: "God alone is our refuge. Let us seek shelter at His Lotus-feet. Sing His Name and glorify Him!" He also offered prayers everyday that the dark clouds be dispelled and that the sun of His mercy may soon shine once more.

As the month of October came to a close, Vaswaniji decided to move from Karachi to Hyderabad where

several of his devotees anxiously looked forward to his coming.

A number of Muslim refugees from the Punjab had settled down in Hyderabad. They had in their hearts nothing but hatred for the Hindus. He paid a visit to their camps and was shocked to see their living conditions and to hear the stories they related of their suffering. Muslims were dear to Vaswaniji even as Hindus were dear to him. He gave them food and clothing and freely gave them the love of his heart.

When the Muslim refugees saw Vaswaniji behaving as a brother to them, their feeling against the Hindu community was pacified to some extent. They called him "Dervish Dada", for they heard him being addressed as "Dada" by those who were with him. Some of them cried out spontaneously: "O Dervish Dada! How good you are!"

"Call me not good," Vaswaniji said. "There is none good but He, the Great God! The goodness of the good is He! He, too, is the greatest of the truly great."

Several girls of the Mira School had migrated to India with their parents. The Mira Campus became desolate, but not for long. Soon enough girls of Muslim families, who had come to settle down in Hyderabad, began to seek admission. As Principal of St. Mira's High School, I welcomed them whole-heartedly and the spacious Mira Building once again hummed with activity and resounded with their laughter. The Muslim girls were as loving as the Hindu girls. Rightly had Gandhiji remarked: "We grown up people have become wicked. But the children are innocent. They will teach you real unity."

Muslim teachers filled the place of Hindu teachers, and the Mira Schools continued to hold the banner of St. Mira. The Muslim Mira girls staged plays reflecting the noble teachings of Vaswaniji whom they met occasionally and whose blessings they too sought.

Gangaram organised gatherings of Hindus and Muslims which were addressed by Vaswaniji. He

interpreted the message of the Qur'an and the Prophet. His talks were very much appreciated by Hindus and Muslims alike. At one such meeting Prof. Haleem, Vice-Chancellor, Sind University, presided and paid a glowing tribute to Vaswaniji and his vision.

Vaswaniji said that he saw One Light in the Gita and the Qur'an, even as he beheld the Light Divine in every human being. The teaching of Islam may well be summed up in these words: Live in peace, give love to one another, and serve the needy and the distressed.

Yet another meeting was attended by Christians, Parsis and Muslims, who had tea together. Vaswaniji had always declared that in all religions shone the One Light. He bowed to this One Light even as he mixed with people of different religions and races.

On 26 December 1947 Hindus in Hyderabad were alarmed beyond words. Muslims created havoc by plundering the few Hindus that remained in Hyderabad. The Hindus were stricken dumb and moved about like shadows. Law and order broke down. Curfew was imposed.

On 6 January 1948 Hindus staying in Karachi also became victims to looting and arson organised on a mass scale. Chaos and confusion became the order of the day. Some of Vaswaniji's devotees like Dr. Hashmatrai Thadhani, Khubchand Shivdasani and Dr. Prem Ramchandani, staying in Karachi, had decided to leave Sind only when Vaswaniji migrated to India. In the looting of January 6, Dr. Prem lost everything and as a consequence decided to leave for Bombay. Dr. Thadhani and Shivdasani and a few others thought it wise to move to Hyderabad and live under the shadow of Vaswaniji. So they shifted to Hyderabad with their families and stayed with friends. Dr. Thadhani stayed with Dr. Manghanmal.

Surveying the conditions existing at that time, Vaswaniji felt that Hindus may not be able to live in Sind in security. He therefore advised his devotees to migrate to India, even though he was himself not

prepared to migrate to India at that time. Several of his devotees however acted up to his advice and left for India. Vaswaniji stayed on in Hyderabad, surrounded by a small group of devotees. His thoughts, nevertheless, were full of his Sindhi sisters and brothers who, leaving behind their homes and hearths, were passing through a period of untold suffering in India.

The following poem, written in India in 1949, gives an indication of his feelings for his displaced Sindhi sisters and brothers in suffering:—

MY SUN-LIT SIND

This day I think, again, of thee, of thee—
  Beloved of this broken, lonely heart:
  My Native Land of mystic Song and Art:
Thou soil of lyric stars and singers three:
      My Sufi Sind!
      My Sun-lit Sind!

This day I think of brothers mine: they weep:
  Of sisters mine: they cry for bread and home:
  I think of all who homeless still do roam:
And when the night doth come, on th' roadside sleep:
      My Sufi Sind!
      My Sun-lit Sind!

Thy children they: O who will give them hope
  And food and shelter, help and health to bear
  Their lot in loneliness,—to bear and dare,
To build again, e'en tho' in dark they grope!
      My Sufi Sind!
      My Sun-lit Sind!

I see around me darkness, suffering, woe:
  The light of hope has died in many hearts;
  I see, alas, that faith in God departs:
And hungry children cry where'er I go:
      My Sufi Sind!
      My Sun-lit Sind!

The Night of Decision

30 January 1948. It was a day writ in letters of blood. On this day was silenced the voice that inspired millions in India and many in other parts of the world. On this day the hands that had blessed millions in India and protected them, became numb. On this day, the kindly light that had blazed the path of India's struggle for freedom ceased to shine. The great-souled Gandhi was no more, having fallen victim to Godse's bullet.

Nearly twenty centuries ago, Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows, was crucified by the Jews. He was nailed to the Cross with three spikes. Two thousand years later, Godse put to death Gandhiji, the Apostle of Truth and Non-violence, by piercing three bullets into his body.

The sad news of Gandhi's death spread throughout the world like wild fire. When the news travelled to us in Sind, many at first refused to believe it. But soon as the news was confirmed, fear gripped the minds of the Hindus. In the hearts of those living in the Nam Nagar, Gandhiji's death created a void. It was as if a near and dear one had departed.

Reminiscing, Vaswaniji later said:

"When, on fateful thirtieth day of January 1948, the news travelled to me in Sind that the great-souled Gandhi, the Beloved of Bharat and the Beloved of many of my friends in Pakistan, had passed on, I said to myself:—'Be still, my heart! Be still and listen!' I listened. The very space had become vocal. It said to me:—'There is no death to him who dedicates his life to the Life Divine!' Death doth not touch Gandhi, for he gave his heart to God. Gandhi served India and clung in faith and reverence to the Lord of Love."

Vaswaniji did not wish to leave the land of his birth. He, however, blessed all those who left Pakistan. They left thinking that Vaswaniji too would soon migrate to Bharat. Thousands of his Sindhi devotees, spread all over Bharat, grew anxious about him and pressed him to leave Hyderabad where it was not safe for him to stay.

The sacred Janmashtami of 1948 was celebrated in Hyderabad in a quiet way. Fellowship-meals were held in which most of the Sindhi Hindus participated. The Muslim Mira teachers helped in preparing *puris*. Janmashtami celebrations would have been incomplete without the *rasa-lila*. The Sindhi Mira girls enacted a scene and even staged the *rasa-lila* in the satsang.

Hindus in India marvelled at Vaswaniji's courage in celebrating the Janmashtami at such a critical time when Hyderabad was flooded with Muslims. Some Muslims could not bear to see this Hindu institution work and planned ways and means to put an end to it.

In the month of September an astounding news was broadcast. Pakistan had lost its leader. Mohammad Ali Jinnah had breathed his last. That very evening Vaswaniji paid his tribute to him at the fellowship meeting. As usual *kanah prasad* was distributed at the close of the meeting.

A Muslim leader, who had settled down in Hyderabad, was not in favour of this Hindu institution

continuing to function. Vaswaniji merely smiled when this was brought to his notice. But the fire of hatred in the heart of this Muslim leader kept smouldering.

India took military action against Hyderabad-Deccan on September 12, a day after Jinnah's death. The Muslim masses in Pakistan were infuriated and organised huge meetings at which they gave vent to their feelings of hatred against India. Ever since, the Muslim mobs would throw stones at Hindu homes including the Nam Nagar even while worship was going on. The Muslims evidently had planned to harass the Hindus forcing them thus to flee to India. They cast envious looks at the two large Mira Buildings and were eager to seize these buildings.

Vaswaniji began preparations for the day he might have to leave for India. He owned a large collection of books. He realised that he could not take all his books with him. So, with Atma's help, he started to sort these out. The strain of this work broke down Vaswaniji's health. One evening he became unconscious. His ulcer had once again troubled him. Owing to loss of blood he grew so weak that he lost consciousness.

Dr. Manghanmal was called to the Nam Nagar for treatment. Vaswaniji's physical suffering would have broken down even a strong-minded person. But his spiritual strength stood by him on such occasions and helped him endure the physical torture. Thanks to the efforts and interest of Dr. Manghanmal, Vaswaniji gradually recovered.

While Vaswaniji was convalescing, his devotees were undergoing a trying time. Their near and dear ones were far, far away from them, and above all he, who was dearest to their hearts, suffered on sick bed. Vaswaniji's physical agony was a source of much mental agony to his devotees. To add to it all, some misguided Muslim leaders incited mobs against Vaswaniji.

A young Muslim Mira girl fell easy prey in the clutches of these leaders. She proclaimed at a gathering

that Hindus had rejoiced at Jinnah's death. For example, she said, Vaswaniji and his group went so far as to distribute *halwa* on the day of Jinnah's passing away.

Thus, *kanah prasad*, which is customarily distributed at most of the fellowship meetings, was turned into *halwa*, a symbol of rejoicing in the Muslim mind. The Muslim masses were stirred. One Muslim, wielding a pistol in his hand, declared: "Vaswaniji shall not live."

Many Muslim parents and girls informed me of this fact. The Collector, a pious Muslim, seeing that chaotic elements were growing and the turbulence was increasing, sent a message through Dr. Manghanmal that Vaswaniji should leave for India. "Vaswaniji's life is more precious than we Muslims may value. It is risky for him to remain here any longer."

Vaswaniji's faith had lifted him high above the stagnant, stifling world where communal strife would not subside. He remained unperturbed despite the Collector's message.

"Death is a guest. I should honour him whenever he comes and wheresoever he may take me, in silent ecstasy to the peace, may be, of the eternal stars," said Vaswaniji with a smile. But the devotees in Hyderabad as well as in India prayed that he may soon get an inner prompting to leave Pakistan, as it was unsafe for him to stay any longer.

Everyday brought a fresh story with itself. Everyday a fresh drama was being enacted in Hyderabad. Finally, the tragic murder of Motiram Gidwani, father of Lachmi, a teacher in the Mira School, whose whole family has been devoted to Vaswaniji, filled the hearts of all with deep sorrow. His dead body was found in a sack beneath a bench in the Guru Sangat Park.

This murder in cold blood made Vaswaniji decide to leave Pakistan. So long as he stayed on, the group devoted to him would not leave. It was not a small group of men, women and children. What if even one or more of them became the victim of the Muslim

mob? Would he not be responsible for the loss of that life? Moreover, responsible people pressed him to go to India, where he could render invaluable service to his people, who lived in insecure conditions, in turmoil and anguish in refugee camps, by giving them the much-needed consolation and courage.

In an article, "The Night of Decision", Vaswaniji wrote in India, he has given vent to some extent to some of his feelings on the night he decided to leave Pakistan.

Vaswaniji wrote thus:

Hyderabad, the city of Haider, the city of fakirs and sufis, the city of star-lit nights, the city where flows the Sindhu, the mighty river of the Vedic age, which has given her mystic name to the holy land of Pakistan.

It was difficult to leave Hyderabad. The night was still: all were asleep: the electric lights in the neighbouring houses were extinguished. In that silent, magic hour of the moon-lit night, I kept awake. Over the night was a veil of beauty, as over my heart was a veil of longing and aspiration. My hands trembled as my heart asked:—"Must I go? Leave the place round which have been woven my many dreams and aspirations? Must I go?"

With tear-touched eyes raised to heaven, I asked:—"Must I go?" Then I heard a voice say:—"Go. They call you, the rishis of your spiritual home. Pakistan has come to part you from your beloved Sind. Go, and drink of the morning dew in other lands, and rejoice in the sun which shines across the seas, and serve them who suffer and moan in Hindustan. Farewell, child of the desert, Farewell!"

And I saw gods going out of the soil of Sind, and I saw other gods coming in, the gods of a strange, new cult, the cult of destruction and ruin. And I saw them razing the temples and mandirs, and I saw them uprooting the samadhis of saints and holy men, and I saw them ravaging verdant gardens and fertile fields. And I saw the Valley of Sind decaying: and

my reverent ears could but catch a few faint echoes of the sufi songs and holy psalms chanted to a departed glory.

Was it all a dream? I find myself in Hindustan, here, too, an exile. No, a pilgrim: my home is neither in Hindustan nor Pakistan. I am a pilgrim: my home is at the feet of fakirs and sages, of seers and saints, and of the poor, homeless ones of this earth. In dear, far-off Sind have come new gods and new forces, and they are sweeping away the institutions and temples and works of men, who laboured and who sacrificed their lives in the service of the Eternal God. But this I know, that none can destroy their dreams. None can sweep away the songs and lyrics of Sa'ami and Latif. These endure as endures the Immortal Spirit of Man!

The next day, Vaswaniji left Hyderabad for Karachi. How different was this journey from the previous ones. For the safety of his devotees, Vaswaniji did not want anyone to be at the station to see him off. Muslim spies seemed to lurk everywhere. The railway platforms were full of them. He wanted to leave very quietly without arresting the slightest attention. He and his small group, consisting of Jashan, Sati, Shantri and myself, bade a silent farewell to the town of their birth and left for Karachi. The others, who remained behind, were to leave Hyderabad as soon as they got word from Vaswaniji, who had to remain in Karachi for a few weeks more.

Vaswaniji and his group stayed as guests of Durgdas Punjabi who had sold his bungalow and now lived in a rented house. Durgdas was trying to establish his business in Bombay and kept flying back and forth. He had also rented a spacious flat at Bombay where, too, Vaswaniji was destined to be his guest for sometime in India.

As soon as Vaswaniji was ready to leave Karachi for India, word was sent to Hyderabad. All his disciples came to Karachi to spend a few days in Vaswaniji's company. Long had they remained away from him

in these difficult days, though every evening Vaswaniji remembered to ask Jashan to inquire about them on the phone and sent them his blessings.

Vaswaniji and his group prepared to leave for India by plane on 10 November 1948. The rest were to follow by ship. Vaswaniji saw to it that arrangements for their tickets had been made. They were to leave on November 12 and reach Bombay after three days.

Before leaving Karachi, Vaswaniji's thoughts turned to Jamshed Nusserwanji, who, like him, strove to bear witness to the teachings of prophets and saints, not through mere lips but through his life. He paid a visit to this sage and servant of humanity.

Years later, while paying a tribute to Jamshed, Vaswaniji wrote with intense feeling about his last visit to Jamshed. He wrote:

It was twilight. The shades of eve were falling fast when I called on Jamshed to get his blessing. I was to leave Pakistan the next day. Sad within me was my heart. Parting was painful. "Farewell to thee, my homeland," I whispered these words in my heart. And my eyes were touched with tears.

With a saddened heart I entered the spacious room where sat, in brooding silence, Beloved Jamshed, beloved of many hearts. He had aged fast. His hair was growing silvery white. His voice had become weak. His heart was sad. "One by one they go," he said to me, "my friends and comrades. They go. And I am left alone."

On leaving him I felt the thread of his life was being snapped. His eyes were radiant with a strange, unearthly light. I bowed to him with love and reverence. I had not the strength for many words. My throat was choked with emotion, my heart was heavy and leaving his room, I said: "Farewell to thee, O prophet of the poor!"

Who can say what Vaswaniji's feelings were on November 10, when he was compelled to bid an eternal adieu to the sacred soil of Sind, the land of his birth,

where he had played fond games in the dawn of his childhood, where he had dreamed wondrous dreams in the morn of his boyhood, where he had cherished noble desires in the noon of his youth, and where he had seen fulfilled many a dream and many a desire in the evening of his life!

The independence of India should have been an occasion for rejoicing for all Indians,—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. For, was this not the event that many of them had worked for and had eagerly looked forward to? On 26 January 1930 people all over India had made 'a tryst with destiny' when they had taken the oath of independence. Vaswaniji himself once had participated in the struggle for the freedom of India. Now India was free, no doubt, but the ill-fated partition had come to part him and hundreds of thousands of others from the land of their birth.

A sadness came upon Vaswaniji even as he boarded the plane. The plane soared into the azure sky above, while the ashen earth lay below. Behind him, that noon, stretched the long story of his past years, the years he had spent in his "sufi, sun-lit Sind". Before him rose a vision of the future, of the years he would spend in India, "the years of exile" as he would later call these. But the memory of the years of the past would serve as a beacon light and blazon the path that lay before him. Never, never would he forget his "sufi, sun-lit Sind." Never, never would he forget his native place, Hyderabad. Never, never would he forget Karachi, where he had spent so many precious years of his life.

Comrade of the Eternal

"My body belongs to greater India, my mind belongs to no one country and my heart belongs to the Universal Spirit. My heart is of Him whom you and I alike adore as the One Eternal Spirit," said Vaswaniji.

He, who adored the One Spirit, landed at the Santa Cruz airport in Bombay on 10 November 1948. Leaving behind him the clear, cloudless, sun-lit skies of Sind, he came to settle down in the province of Bombay, where the skies remain cloud-clad for good part of the year.

The day was well nigh spent and the faint light of the sun flickered on trees and hills and tinged them with rouge when the plane descended. Soon the evening twilight trembled and was followed in the twinkling of an eye by the gathering darkness. Myriads of stars shone in the deepening vastness of the skies overhead, while Vaswaniji was yet at the aerodrome, blessing those that had come to welcome him.

The 'exile', who was in the evening of his life, was greeted by the departing day as well as the descending night, by the suffused glow of the setting sun as well as the radiant light of the glimmering stars. Did it mean that in India his mission would be to spread the sunshine of love, devotion and cheer and thus

scatter the gloom and despair from the minds of the suffering and sorrowful? Did it mean that many torches would be kindled from the fire of his self-denial, self-sacrifice and self-control?

With a calm countenance but with moist eyes Vaswaniji left the plane and waited for completion of airport formalities. He then entered the car that took him to 7 Queen's Court, Churchgate, where he was to stay as guest of Durgadas Punjabi. In contrast to the winding lanes of Hyderabad and the quiet streets and roads of Karachi, the overcrowded roads of Bombay over which the car travelled appeared to be so baffling and so bewildering! His penetrating eyes could well glimpse the glaring lights with their queer shadows and the glittering sights with their boisterous sounds. He was not new to Bombay, but now he looked at it from a different perspective, wondering whether he, "a child of the desert", could make his abode in the city.

Hundreds of sisters and brothers, devotees of Vaswaniji, who were unable to go to the aerodrome had collected on the Oval, opposite 7 Queen's Court. They vied with one another to be the first to fall at his blessed feet and to receive the touch of his holy hands. Some even yearned to kiss the hem of his garment. Most of them were meeting him after nearly a year.

News of Vaswaniji's arrival in Bombay spread swiftly and from the very next day streams of people poured into Durgadas' house. They came from Bombay and its suburbs. Some even came from places outside Bombay. Mira girls, too, did not lag behind. Great was the joy of meeting, but Vaswaniji's face, always so serene, now wore an expression of sadness. He felt happy to see once again the fond, familiar faces of aspirants. But his eyes were touched with tears, when he heard their tales of grief, for much was the suffering they were undergoing. Owners of spacious houses were living in barracks and cells. Thousands upon thousands had been compelled to evacuate empty-

handed, leaving behind in Pakistan their property and other belongings. Hundreds of thousands of evacuees from Pakistan were confined into refugee camps.

Many leaders of the Sindhi community also acquainted him with the wretched, piteous plight of the refugee camps set up by the government to accomodate the evacuees. They requested him to visit the refugee camps to see for himself the horrible conditions in which they were living.

These heart–rending tales robbed Vaswaniji of his rest. He would keep awake for hours together at night and lift his heart to the Master of Mercy in prayer to grant the people of his community strength to bear their suffering with fortitude.

Nanik Motwani, a well-known businessman of Bombay, had plunged in the service of the evacuees with his heart and soul. He did not spare pains to rehabilitate them. He took Vaswaniji to Kurla, Pawai, Mulund and Akbar camps.

Vaswaniji and his group were deeply distressed to see the pale, wan, emaciated faces of Sindhi men, women and children. They saw the helpless, grief-stricken evacuees, who were herded together in shelters meant not for human beings but for beasts of burden. They were shocked to listen to their tales of woe. Vaswaniji sought as hard as he could to instil hope and faith in souls sunk in gloom and despair. He would take to each camp hundreds of one-rupee notes which he distributed among the evacuees

Vaswaniji was also taken to the Victoria Docks where evacuees from Sind were herded together as each steamer from Karachi brought thousands of the helpless and the shelterless. Vaswaniji was appalled to see their tragic condition,—their poverty and suffering.

Vaswaniji would urge his disciples and devotees to spend their time in serving the needy and the distressed.

"There is a holier music in the silent service of

the poor and the lowly than all the gorgeous chanting of temple priests," he once told them. After a pause, he went on to say: "Stormbeaten and hungry for bread, alas, are so many! They seek shelter, they need light in darkness; let me see my Master in them. He cometh with soiled hands and tattered garments: in serving them, I serve Him!" His thoughts were full of his grief-stricken and sorrow-smitten sisters and brothers.

On another occasion he said:

In an ancient book we read of a 'Servant' of humanity,—a servant of the poor and lowly.

On the threshold of the Heaven-world he stands. Just then is heard a voice: it cometh from a corner of the Earth. The Voice says.—"In anguish am I. Is there none to help?"

And the 'Servant' says:—"Not for me the joy of *mukti* or the Heaven-world. Back to the Earth must I go, for a brother or a sister is in pain."

With stories and sayings, with anecdotes and illustrations, of which Vaswaniji had no dearth, he would keep impressing all those who came to him, to serve their fellow-beings.

Vaswaniji had his own way of appealing to the hearts of the young.

"If there is one religion which India and the nations need today," he declared. "it is reverence for the poor. Young men! There is a great work for you. It will sanctify your lives. In the cottages of the poor dwells the God your hearts are seeking. In their tears and groans, in their prayers and aspirations is His call to you, young men!"

Whenever and wherever he met the rich and the young, his one word to them was: "Serve! Serve!"

There were days when people came to him, fell at his feet and burst into tears. "Much have we suffered," they sobbed and said, "we have come to India penniless And to add to it all our very own have disowned us. We know no peace of mind."

In order to fill their depressed hearts with courage and consolation, Vaswaniji would say: "Be not

disheartened, brothers. You feel depressed for you have been rendered homeless. Pray to Him and find solace in repeating His Name!"

"We are exiles here," he added, "therefore are we passing through difficult days. Be not daunted by dangers and difficulties. Chant the Name of God and all difficulties will disappear. In times of trials and tribulations, I read from the Gita and the Sukhmani and my heart is filled with peace untold. When the day is about to slip, I feel so weak that life seems to ebb out of me. I then settle myself in silence and humble myself before God. And He gives me new strength."

The people, who came with tears in their eyes, went away with hearts filled with faith and fervour to face the storms of life.

As for Vaswaniji there was no rest, no respite. Soon after one group of people left him, another in distress would come. And oh, the affection he would shower upon them!

"We have lost all peace of mind, Dada," they would cry in agony "Bless us that our troubled, tortured minds be filled with peace."

To all such people Vaswaniji would say:

"Brothers, I too am an ordinary being like you and am assailed by storms. At such moments I do two things. I strive to sow two seeds.

"One of these is gratitude. I offer gratitude to God alike in sunshine and rain. The other seed is service. I seek to serve the poor and the broken ones and my heart is filled with peace

"In your moments of trial and tribulation, I fain would ask of you to think of the innumerable blessings that still are yours. We all have the sun and moon, clouds and stars, rivers and mountains, and fields and flowers to enjoy. Should you not feel grateful to God for all these gifts?

"If you think of those that are less favoured by fortune than you and try to serve them, you will acquire the peace of mind you so badly need."

The brothers in distress would be greatly relieved

of their mental suffering even as they listened to Vaswaniji. Reflecting upon what he told them, they would be greatly relieved, when they felt that Vaswaniji also suffered. When even saints suffer, what justification have ordinary folk to complain? Suffering met suffering eye to eye and understood; and brothers would go away greatly consoled.

Vaswaniji was invited by various organisations in Bombay to address them and since the thoughts of the suffering of the people were always with him, he would inspire them with the idea of service of the poor and the lowly, the forsaken and the forlorn.

Once Vaswaniji was invited to address a gathering of the Progressive Club. The audience comprised men and women of the higher strata of life,—the rich and the prosperous, the elite and the educated,—of different classes and communities. He spoke to them of the suffering of the poor and the neglected and emphasised the need of each doing his bit to relieve the appalling tragedy that faces the unfortunate ones.

Vaswaniji recited on this occasion a beautiful prayer of Shanti Deva. Shanti Deva was a prince, but he renounced his all to follow in the footsteps of his master, Gautama Buddha, and dedicated his life to the service of suffering humanity. And one of his illuminating prayers, which Vaswaniji passed on to the members of the Progressive Group was :

May I be for all beings
A healer of pain!
May I be to all who ail
A doctor and a nurse.
May I give food and drink to all,
Who suffer from pangs of hunger and thirst!
May I be to the poor a treasure untold.
May I be a defender of those,
Who forsaken lie on the road-side.
May I be to those who long for the other shore,
A boat and a bridge.
May I be a lamp that holds the light,
To those who lose the way.

In the Temple of Trees

The first anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom was celebrated on 30 January 1949. Mrs. Bapsy Sabhawala, a Parsi lady, who had been actively connected with Gandhiji's activities, held a meeting of friends and associates to observe this day. She held the meeting in her spacious bungalow and invited Vaswaniji to address the gathering.

The meeting commenced with Gandhiji's favourite song: "Vaishnava Jana", composed by Narsi Mehta, a popular saint of Gujarat. The song over, Vaswaniji spoke to a receptive audience comprising Parsis, Hindus and Muslims.

He said: "I wonder if ever you asked yourself the question:—What is the meaning of the word, 'Gandhi'? The word 'Gandhi' means one who is 'fragrant': and fragrance-filled is the life of Brother Gandhi. His fragrance lay just in this that he identified himself with the broken ones, with the indentured labourers, with the outcasts,—the 'untouchables', the Harijans,—with the poorest, the lowliest and the lost, with all those on whom the world, intoxicated with power, tramples upon every day. Gandhi was a champion of the poor against oppression, injustice and insolence of the might and power.

"Gandhi's had been a dedicated life,—a life dedicated to the service of the poor. This martyred man, adored by millions, gives us the *mantra* of sacrifice. This Prophet of Peace had to spend many years within the area of challenge and storm. But his life never failed to bear witness to that 'new freedom' which is fellowship with the poor and the oppressed.

"Sometimes, when I think of Mahatma Gandhi, the figure of another great one rises before me,—the figure of Father Damien. Damien dedicated his life to the service of lepers and he became a leper. Brother Gandhi dedicated his life to the service of the poor in India, and he became a *fakir* : he became a poor man.

"Father Damien on one occasion said:— 'In the Kingdom of God there are no aliens!' May I not say that in the Kingdom of Free India there should be no aliens? And yet,—the thought has come to me painfully, again and again,—in this Free India I feel that I am an alien! Let us shake hands of fellowship and brotherhood, one with the other. Let us strive to understand the life and teaching of Brother Gandhi. He was a true brother : therefore is he a Mahatma, a great soul. He was a true brother : therefore is he become one of the shining lights of humanity. And the light of his life, the light of love, shall grow from more to more in the coming days."

(From "Gandhi : The Man of the Ages")

A number of friends and admirers of Vaswaniji desired that he should settle down in Bombay so that they could have the benefit of his guidance in the service of the displaced who were under great distress. But Vaswaniji, who was a lover of quiet, felt that the bustling, bewildering and baffling metropolis of Bombay was not the place he could stay in for long. He had hardly stayed in Bombay for three months when he felt an urge to move to a quieter place

Bhai Mulchand Uttamchandani, a businessman, devoted to Vaswaniji, had for sometime felt that Vaswaniji would soon get tired of Bombay. He had, therefore, rented a flat for Vaswaniji in Poona in

Panday Cottage in Pudumjee Park and kept it in readiness so that Vaswaniji would have no problem of accomodation if and when he decided to leave Bombay.

It had come to the knowledge of some of Vaswaniji's devotees that Bhai Mulchand had reserved a flat for Vaswaniji in Poona. So Dr. Sati Mirchandani, Dr. Hiranand Hathiramani and Mulchand Vaswani soon made Poona their home, in the hope that Vaswaniji too would one day settle down in Poona. They did not have to wait for long as Vaswaniji, after having stayed in Bombay for about three months, finally decided to make his headquarters in Poona.

Poona is situated at a distance of hardly 190 kms. from Bombay. It is also the second largest city in Maharashtra. The sea-girt city of Bombay, however, teems with people and bustles with activity, while the atmosphere of Poona is calm and quiet.

Poona, the land of the Peshwas, is a historical place. It is also an educational centre It commands a picturesque view, being pleasantly situated at a height of about 550 metres above sea level at the confluence of the Mula and Mutha rivers. During monsoon, Poona looks like a damsel dressed in a green skirt and blue blouse. Carpets of emerald green grass lie stretched below, while the blue aspiring hills seem to rise high in an effort to touch the cloud-clad, sapphire skies. The green of the grass and the blue of the hills lend added charm and beauty to the hill-station of Poona.

On 13 February 1949 Vaswaniji left Bombay for Poona by the Deccan Queen. A number of Sindhi devotees and admirers collected at the Poona Station to welcome Vaswaniji. His eyes were aglow with a mystic light as he alighted from the train and stood on the platform ablaze with electric lights.

Vaswaniji was garlanded by his devotees and greeted with warmth by his admirers. The Sindhis of Poona were glad beyond measure that their beloved leader, whom they would address as "Beloved Dadaji", was in their midst to guide their destiny, to guard them from peril, to lend his hand of help in their hour of

agony and trial, to lead them onward, forward and Godward. Like sheep that rejoice at the sight of their shepherd, the Sindhis rejoiced to see Vaswaniji whom they regarded as their saviour and redeemer. Now that Vaswaniji was in Poona, they felt safe in his protecting shadow; they were secure because of the blessings he would bestow upon them in abundance.

Maharashtra had been blessed by the living presence of saints like Eknath and Tukaram, Dnyanesvara and Muktabai. Yet another saint, Vaswaniji, now chose to make this State his abode. If Alandi and Dehu were places of pilgrimage, Maharashtra was destined to have yet another pilgrim-spot at the Mira Nagar. If statues of Dnyaneswar and Tukaram drew streams of devotees, in the near future, Vaswaniji's large bronze statue in Sadhu Vaswani Chowk would greet visitors on their entry to Poona.

Fellowship meetings soon commenced in the evenings in Panday Cottage. As news of the satsang spread, devotees in large numbers began to join in it. Because of inadequate accomodation, many of the devotees could not be accomodated.

Bhai Ramchand Daryanani, who used to attend satsang regularly, lived in a bungalow nearby. The bungalow had a large compound and Ramchand requested Vaswaniji to hold the satsang in his compound. Vaswaniji consented. Every evening thenceforth people sat beneath the canopy of azure skies and listened to devotional singing, led at times by Dr. Sati Mirchandani, and basked in the sunshine of Vaswaniji's words of wisdom.

The earth, parched and dry, longs for rain in the months of summer. The hearts of the satsangis, forsaken and forlorn in their hour of exile, yearned for the nectar of the Name Divine. To the satsang came aspirants from near and far, from various quarters of Poona, to receive Vaswaniji's blessings and to listen to him.

If Vaswaniji was concerned about the spiritual uplift of his devotees, he did not forget their material

well-being. He visited the Pimpri Refugee Camp where thousands of poor, displaced persons were sheltered. His tender heart was touched to see the agony of the poor Sindhi people. To them he said: "Forget not that God is your Father and also your Friend. God, the great Giver, gives you everything. Seek not favours from the rich, ye that have been reduced to poverty. Instead, knock on God's door."

Sindhis were not used to begging alms. In the pre-partition era, the Sindhi community was regarded as one of the most generous and enterprising communities in India. Sindhis would contribute generously to noble causes. But in the wake of partition, many Sindhi evacuees had left everything behind and were reduced to a state of abject poverty. Some of them were therefore compelled to beg for their daily needs.

Once on his visit to the Pimpri Camp, Vaswaniji took with himself bundles of one-rupee notes for distribution. There was such a grabbing for notes that he had perforce to stop. It was with a sorrow-laden heart that he returned from Pimpri Camp.

Before leaving, Vaswaniji bade the Sindhis of the pimpri camp to be united. He advised them to form a committee and choose a president. He urged them to forget all differences and not to be critical.

"Consider not yourselves to be refugees. You belong to India. The rishis of India are your rishis. Therefore feel proud that you are Indians," said Vaswaniji.

Vaswaniji then appealed to the rich people to help the needy and the distressed He brought his talk to a close thus :

"Krishna once sat to his simple meals, and suddenly said: 'I am thirsty: will you give me water to drink?' Up rose a disciple. Krishna awaited his return. Several minutes passed before the disciple came back with a cup filled with water 'So late?' said Krishna. And the disciple said 'Master! I ran to get a golden cup.' Krishna looked at the golden cup, then smiled and

said 'Did you not know that I ever love to drink water in a broken cup?'

"The poor, forlorn, the world-forsaken ones are the brokencups: the Master fain would drink the 'water' they would offer him. Give Him water to drink in a 'broken cup'."

Vaswaniji's thoughts often turned to the Sindhis in distress. He would often cut himself off from this world of hate and strife and, diving deep into the innermost recesses of his soul, burst forth into songs. Many of these songs reflect on the sad condition in which his people found themselves after the partition of India. Through the songs, he poured his benedictions upon them. His blessings did indeed serve the Sindhi folk in good stead, for by his grace many activities sprung up, many enterprises prospered and there was a regeneration in the social, cultural and spiritual life of the Sindhis.

This year,—in 1949,—Vaswaniji re-started the Welfare Department in Poona to help the needy Sindhi families. Tanumal, a sincere soul, greatly sympathetic to the needs of the distressed and the down-trodden, was put in charge of this department. He as well as his wife, Chaturbai, served the needy with a tender heart. They offered welcome to all who knocked at their door at any hour of the day.

Tanumal's heart overflowed with compassion for the destitute and the desolate. Being a man of means, he gave away a good amount of his own, too, apart from the funds which came to him for disbursement. He reminds one of Rishi Dayaram, 'who gave in secret, his left hand not knowing what his right hand gave' Like Rishi Dayaram, he identified himself with the thousands of men and women who cried for their daily bread.

The Vaisakhi day, thrice blessed as the day of birth, of illumination and of Mahaparinirvana of Gautama Buddha, was the first day celebrated by the satsang in Poona on a large scale in 1949. With the plight of the poor in view, many of whom cried

out for food, Vaswaniji opened a grocery store, where well-to-do devotees purchased grains and donated these to Vaswaniji for distribution among the poor. The celebration of the Vaisakhi started a chain reaction, and as in Sind, days sacred to the memory of many other great ones began to be celebrated with great enthusiasm.

The sacred Janmashtami day had a special significance for the satsang. It was always celebrated in the satsang in Hyderabad as well as in Karachi with great enthusiasm and no celebration of Janmashtami would be held without the *rasa-lila*. Even when surrounded by Muslims in Hyderabad, this day had been celebrated in the usual way with the *rasa-lila* topping the program.

As the sacred Janmashtami drew near and the program for the celebration was being chalked out, Vaswaniji expressed that the *rasa-lila* should form a part of the program. Mohini Pahilajrai, an ex-student of Mira School and an ardent devotee of Vaswaniji, joined me in training a few ex-students of the Mira School, who were in Poona, for the *rasa-lila*. Thus *rasa-lila* became an important item of the very first Janmashtami program celebrated in Poona, too.

Tanumal always sought opportunities to serve Vaswaniji. Once he took Vaswaniji and his group to the sacred samadhis of Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadev Desai at the Agha Khan Palace in his car. Vaswaniji paid the homage of his heart to Kasturba Gandhi and Mahadev Desai, two illustrious children of Mother India.

On another occasion Tanumal took Vaswaniji to the Dnyaneswara Temple at Alandi.

Dehu is another place to which flock the devotees of Saint Tukaram. Sisters and brothers of the satsang urged Vaswaniji to take them to Dehu. Accordingly, a trip to Dehu was organised Vaswaniji and his group saw the little dark cell where Tukaram had spent the last years of his earth-life. It is amazing in what simple, unostentatious manner many a saint abides during his

sojourn on earth. The world's attention is often focussed upon saints after they have departed, having lived a life of *tapasya* and self-denial, a life of absolute surrender to the Will Divine. In Vaswaniji's words: "Entire self-surrender to God is the secret of saints."

In Dehu, Vaswaniji asked his group to sing Tuka's *abhangas* and chant Nam-kirtan. His heart was so deeply stirred with emotion at visiting the spot sanctified by the great saint, that tears rolled down his cheeks. After a while, he went into a trance, and when his lips quivered, all became alert as they expected him to burst into song, which he soon did. He sang as the spirit in him moved. The devotees had not seen Tuka, who had appeared in the seventeenth century, but they considered themselves blessed to have lived in the time when Saint Vaswani lived. And in Vaswaniji they beheld a galaxy of saints.

Vaswaniji's presence soon began to be felt by the people of Poona and several individuals and associations decided to give him due honour. A meeting in the Gokhale Hall was organised in the month of March for the purpose. The spirit behind the meeting was Acharya Karve who had done yoeman's service to the cause of women's education in Maharashtra. The meeting was presided over by Yardi, Collector of Poona. A cross section of the people of Poona were present at the meeting.

At the outset Acharya Karve greeted Vaswaniji. In his speech he said:

"The saint of Sind hath graced the city of Poona. I have known him for over twenty years. He is a great scholar who was invited to the Parliament of Religions in Berlin. He went there to represent the Hindu faith. The light of his life hath drawn towards God numerous aspiring souls.

"Vaswaniji founded in Hyderabad-Sind the Mira Movement in Education. He has spread the teachings of the Gita and the message of the Rishis and the sages of India not only in the province of Sind

but throughout India. His activities were suspended because of the partition. And he has chosen to make Poona his home. We, the people of India, offer him a warm welcome.

"Sindhis are very, very sincere. When I moved about in Sind I made many friends. Our Women's University also attracted many Sindhi students and I have great admiration for the Sindhis. When I went around the world on my mission to collect funds, I came across several Sindhis as they are spread all over the world. And the Sindhis received us so very kindly and helped us so liberally that I have great sympathies with these people.

"It is our good fortune that a holy personality like Sri Vaswani has made Poona his home. We, the people of Poona, greet him and extend to him a warm welcome. We request him to bless the city of Poona."

Vaswaniji then rose to speak. He put off his cap and bowed to the gathering. He then cleared his throat and in a soft, sweet tone said:

"I am not a stranger to Poona. I have come here as a pilgrim. When I reached Poona on 13th February, I bowed to the memory of Shri Lokamanya Tilak, Shri Gokhale and Shri Shivaji. In Maharashtra my thoughts have turned over and over again to her saints,—Ramdas, Eknath, Tukaram, and Dnyanesvar. They realised the purpose of life, and they imparted teaching which the world has yet to understand. My thoughts turned also to Dr. Bhandarkar. All of them were great men, and it is the great men that are real men. They possess the threefold treasure: (1) Light (2) Love and (3) Serenity.

"I find present in this gathering Sindhi brothers and sisters. Naturally they expect that I should, on this occasion, relate their troubles and grievances. But I may not do so on this occasion. Were I to do so, I am afraid your hearts will tremble. I can only say this to my Sindhi brothers and sisters: 'You come from a centre of a wonderful civilisation. Therefore

mix and mingle with the people of India in a spirit of co-operation and love. Mix with the Maharashtrians and Parsis and Gujaratis.'

"What do I find here in Poona? The atmosphere of Poona is peace-breathing. Bombay is a business centre It is a centre bustling with activity. I find that Poona is a centre of culture. And what is culture? An eminent thinker defines culture as sweetness and light. I would go further and say: 'Culture is service, culture is fellowship, and culture is love.' May we live here in a spirit of fellowship and love.

"When I came from Karachi to Bombay I saw so many sleeping on the road-side, at night, shivering in the cold of winter. I saw so many in tattered clothes, hungry and homeless And I said to myself: 'They, too, are my brothers and sisters.'

"And I saw many of my people too who had travelled to Bombay from Sind sleeping on the road-side. And I said to myself: 'May my people be your people as your people are my people. May we grow in the spirit of brotherhood, of fellow-feeling! None is an alien, a stranger. Brothers are we all!

"It was the hour of eve. The sun had set. And even as I stood and gazed, methinks, I heard a voice. It was the voice of beloved Gandhi. And what said the voice? May I tell you? The voice said: May a great shakti arise out of my ashes,—the shakti of love! Listen! Ye of India. May this force of love unite the poor with them that are in power! May such a shakti arise and bind together people of different sects and creeds and communities Such a shakti, the power of love, will build India anew. Then will India arise again and will become immortal even as Sri Ram and Sri Krishna are immortal, even as Buddha and Christ are immortal.

"Once again with folded hands I greet you. I am your brother and a servant of the sages and saints of humanity. And may the benediction of my Master and your Master shine and shine and shine upon you for ever and evermore!"

Yardi, who presided over the meeting was visibly moved by Vaswaniji's words. When he rose to speak he said: "It is a great privilege for us to have in our midst a great man like Vaswaniji I have lived in Sind for six years. I am regarded as a semi-Sindhi. Before I went to Sind, I did not have a good opinion of Sindhis but as I came in more and more contact with them I began to change my opinion. Let me tell you that the Hindus of Sind are as good as the Hindus of other provinces of India. We all are one!

"Wherever I went in Sind, I found people held Sadhu Vaswani in high esteem. They spoke highly of him. He is at once a saint, a scholar, a philosopher and a man of renunciation. I would like him to make Poona the centre of his activities. Maharashtra is not a rich province. But the hearts of Maharashtrians are filled with love. On behalf of the government and the people of Poona, I take the opportunity to assure him that he will get all the co-operation he needs May he settle down in Poona and impart his teaching not merely to the Sindhis but to all in Poona and illuminate this city with the light of his love."

Principal Joag of the Wadia College was President of the Poona Prarthana Samaj, which was associated with the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj Brahmos had always regarded Vaswaniji as one of their own. Joag invited Vaswaniji to a meeting of the Prarthana Samaj. Vaswaniji spoke in Hindi about Prarthana or Prayer. His eyes shone with a strange unearthly light even as he parted his lips to recite the ancient prayer of the rishis which he himself loved to offer everyday:

Asato maa sad gamaya!
Tamaso maa Jyotirgamaya!
Mrityormaa amrtam gamaya!

Lead me from the unreal into the Real!
Lead me from darkness into Light!
Through death lead me into Immortality!

"We need to be led from the darkness of vices,

from the darkness of lust, anger and greed into light," Vaswaniji told the gathering.

He closed his speech on the note that schools, colleges and universites should be centres of light. It is sons and daughters of light, he urged, that would lead this broken, bleeding world into light.

Vaswaniji's 69th birthday had been observed in a quiet manner the previous year in Bombay. Things were then unsettled, as he had landed in India only a couple of months before. By the time his 70th birthday came, Vaswaniji had settled down in Poona and many of the activities which had been carried on in Sind under his guidance were also re-started. Several of his devotees too had by this time flocked to Poona and settled down there. They therefore decided to celebrate his 70th birthday in a fitting manner.

Tributes were paid to him at the fellowship meeting where Sindhis came together to pay to him the homage of their hearts and to receive his blessings A student of the Hyderabad Mira School, who had joined the Navin Hind High School in Poona, in her speech expressed a hope that a Mira School may soon be started in Poona. Vaswaniji was touched to hear these words And so were others associated with the Mira School in Hyderabad.

On 26 January 1950, Vaswaniji started a Charitable Dispensary in a house Bhai Ramchand Daryanani gave for the purpose, free of rent. Smt. Mithi Advani donated a sum of three thousand rupees in sacred memory of her husband, late Col R. T. Advani. The Daya Dispensary of Hyderabad-Sind was therefore re-christened as Radhakrishna Daya Dispensary in Poona. Dr. Hiranand Hathiramani was placed in charge. Vaswaniji performed the opening ceremony of this little centre. He breathed out the aspiration that it may serve as a centre of healing, which indeed it has proved to be.

Parpati Malkani always had longed to start a centre for women and girls where some needy sisters could earn their livelihood by stitching and

sewing. In India, where most of the Sindhi families had come as displaced persons, many families had been reduced to pecuniary straits. They had the will to work, but unfortunately they lacked opportunities.

Parpati managed to get a garrage for the work centre. She sought Vaswaniji's blessings and requested him to perform the opening ceremony of this little centre too. He blessed this little venture and breathed out a prayer that the centre may serve its purpose. He always believed that work, done in the spirit of worship, purified people and sanctified them. The centre was a tiny mustard seed that was being sown; in time to come it would flower into a regular welfare department.

As many of the activities had been re-started in Poona, it was high time the seed of the Mira School too was re-planted in the soil of Maharashtra. Gangaram Sajandas, who had served the Mira Schools in Sind, longed once again for a school so as to sow the seeds of his Master's teachings in young impressionable minds in the hope that these seeds would sprout some day.

Vaswaniji, for whom the cause of education was dearest to his heart, gave his consent. A Committee was formed with Vaswaniji as the President Gangaram set his shoulders to the wheel and plunged heart and soul into the new task. It was a tremendous job he was undertaking. But he was certain that with God's grace and Vaswaniji's blessings all would work out well.

The search for suitable premises for the School started. Principal Joag was of great help in this matter. He suggested to Gangaram that he should arrange to get the Council Hall for the Mira School till some permanent arrangement could be made.

The Council Hall was very centrally located, and it was used by the state government for four months in a year only when, during the monsoons, the Secretariat was shifted from Bombay to Poona. For the remaining eight months the Council Hall lay vacant. Vaswaniji readily gave his consent to this idea. The

Chief Minister B. G. Kher, who had heard much of Vaswaniji and his work, willingly lent the use of the Council Hall for the Mira School. Acharya Karve performed the opening ceremony of the Mira School on 1 March 1950.

Chandiram Advani, who had worked for several years as the Headmaster of the W. B. High School in Karachi, became the first Headmaster of the Mira School, till he retired nine years later. He continues to serve Vaswaniji and numerous departments of service even after retirement in his capacity as Joint Secretary of the Brotherhood Association and Manager of the Kalyan Nari Shalla.

The season of monsoon was not far off and Gangaram felt that the Mira School would have to move out of the Council Hall as the State Secretariat would shift during this period The satsangis were also afraid that satsang may have to be held in the open beneath the raining clouds. But Vaswaniji, who was conscious of these problems, remained unperturbed.

Gangaram and several other satsangis made a hectic search for a suitable place which could solve the problems of housing the school as well as meeting place for the satsang.

On the Connaught Road, at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the Poona Railway Station, was a majestic building called the Jeejeebhoy Castle which housed the Deccan College & Research Institute. At this time the Deccan College was moving to its own campus at Yervada, and the Jeejeebhoy Castle was falling vacant. When this came to the notice of Gangaram, he conveyed the information to Vaswaniji. Vaswaniji expressed a desire that efforts be made to acquire the building for the Mira Schools, as he felt that the building would well serve as a centre of their activities for decades to come.

Jeejeebhoy Castle had a history of its own. It was in this building that Edwin Arnold wrote his world famous poems, the Song Celestial and the Geeta Govindam. Edwin Arnold was a professor in

the Deccan College. While he was preparing to write the Song Celestial, this talented professor, deeply interested in ancient Indian lore, would go on his bicycle and discuss with renowned pandits of Poona the Gita and other Indian scriptures. These discussions led to the writing of the poems, The Song Celestial and later the Geeta Govindam. These poems immediately captured the hearts of the readers; they made such a strong appeal to their minds and hearts.

The Jeejeebhoy Castle, once the centre of activity of Sir Edwin Arnold, was destined to become, in due course, the headquarters of Vaswaniji, a veritable living embodiment of the Gita. After a few months of hard work, Gangaram managed to get the Jeejeebhoy Castle requisitioned for St. Mira's High School on rental basis.

In June the Mira School moved into this building. The Jeejeebhoy Castle had a spacious hall and fellowship meetings began to be held in this hall. In the hall was hung the beautiful picture of St. Mira which Gangaram had brought from Hyderabad. This building would later be purchased by the Brotherhood Association. On its grounds would come up many more structures. The old building would house St. Mira's College for Girls and new buildings would come up for St. Mira's High School, St. Mira's English Medium School, St. Mira's College Hostel, Gita Bhavan and Khemlani Dispensary.

The new Sanctuary Hall, which was later called the Mira Hall, was larger than the Krishna Hall of Hyderabad–Sind. Thus God gave more than He had taken away!

The world is poor, ever so poor in understanding. Little do we realise that the sun disappears every eve only to shine in splendour the next morn. Even so, God takes away only to grant in greater measure in time to come.

At the first fellowship meeting held in the Sanctuary Hall of the Jeejeebhoy Castle, Vaswaniji gave a brief but beautiful discourse which may be summed up thus:

"Birds are we that keep flying from one branch of a tree to another. All that you see is fleeting, is transient. What abides in this world of impermanence is the Nama, the Name Divine. Forget Him not, but remember Him every passing moment of your life!"

In this Mira Hall, Vaswaniji would sit for sixteen years, every morn and eve, during fellowship meetings and would often give discourses. In the season of rain, when it would not be possible for him to go out for walks, he would often sit under the canopy of the trees in the Mira Compound and do his reading and writing work in what he called "The Temple of Trees". He would at times write brief but beautiful thoughts for his devotees. A few of these inspiring thoughts are given here:

And bless me that I may hear in my heart, each day, a new song of Thy Mercy and Thy Love!

* * *

Make me Thy singer, O Lord! that in some temple-houses I may, everyday, sing Thy song of Silence!

* * *

Love thou everyone in God and love thou God in everyone!

* * *

Kindle the Light! And the Light is within you!

* * *

God wants of you no big, showy things. Offer Him your little gifts of love, and He will acept them as His Holy Food, His Sacrament.

* * *

O my Heart! Listen to His flute in the gleaming waters, in the rustling leaves, in the language of the flowers, in the words of holy men,—the saints of God!

* * *

To Thee I bring my prayers and tears.
I offer myself to Thee!

* * *

And each day He writes His message for thee in thy heart:— "*Tat Tvam Asi*! That Thou Art!"

* * *

In thy Sacred Heart, O Krishna, I see a star:
It shines each day, it shines on me wherever I go, near or far!

* * *

In all books, behold that Beauty of the one letter: OM!

* * *

Many are the Temples they have built in many lands!
When will some, with love and humility in the heart, build the Temple of man?

* * *

Be humble and speak always what is true!

* * *

He came: He smiled: He summoned me to th' inner shrine·
He said:— "All things are his who knows all things are Mine!"

* * *

Be thou a shining Ray
Of His white light, each day!

* * *

Krishna! Krishna! Come! Come!
And make my heart a Temple of Thy Love!

* * *

The Way of Love

A few of us were with Vaswaniji one day at the Empress Garden. Vaswaniji had just recovered from illnesss and Dr. Motwani, who was treating him, had advised that he be taken out for fresh air. So Tanumal had brought Vaswaniji in his car with a small group consisting of Jashan, Sati, Shantri and myself to the Empress Garden.

After a confinement of nearly a month, Vaswaniji had come out and sat under the canopy of the azure skies, surrounded by trees and flowers of which he was a great lover. In the midst of blooming nature he was in an eloquent mood.

Questions were put to Vaswaniji concerning spiritual life, the way of meditation and *lokasangraha*, service of the community.

One of us said to him: "Dadaji ! In your discourses you have been asking us to sit everyday in meditation, in silence, for about two hours. We find this very difficult. What may we do for these two hours?"

"Go within!" replied Vaswaniji.

"It is so difficult to go within and meditate for two hours at a stretch," remarked the devotee.

"Then read the lives of saints and contemplate

upon their sayings. You may even read a beautiful poem or reflect upon a good deed. You may sit in silence and frame a program of *lokasangraha*, service of the community."

Vaswaniji had been repeatedly harping upon the service of the community since his arrival in India because of the horrible conditions of life and living of Sindhis, many of whom had to leave all they possessed in Pakistan.

After a pause, Vaswaniji said:

"One way of spending time profitably is to sit behind closed doors and transcribe Guru Granth Sahib or utterances of saints. One can thus easily commit to memory these utterances. When a devotee requested a saint to impart him spiritual teaching, the saint asked him to write the Name of Ram on page after page of the notebooks.

"Wonderful are the treasures one acquires by going into silence. In moments of silence you can put to yourselves questions such as: 'What is the secret of life? What am I in need of?'

"Lao Tsze says: 'Silence is returning to the Root'. What is the Root of life? What is the Root of the Universe? Dive deep within. Delve deep within. Meditate until you realise that the one thing needful is the priceless pearl of peace. Then must you meditate how to attain this pearl. Lao Tsze says this Root has no name. But he names it Tao. When he was asked what Tao was, he replied: 'Tao is the Way.'

"Lao Tsze says at one place that Tao is the Way of Truth. In my humble view the Truth of truths is Love. So Tao is Love. Wonderful, indeed, are the utterances of Lao Tsze.

"Each one of us has his own experience. As for me, I may say from personal experience that peace of mind lies in love. The way of life is the Way of Love.

"The man of *chitta-shanti* is not aggressive. His way is the way of gentleness, softness. He never uses harsh words and is never aggressive. Lao Tsze

speaks of a law according to which what goes forward must come back; what goes backward must come forward. Softness springs from silence. Have we not observed how when a man of silence speaks, though his words be few, they penetrate our hearts? The words we speak, however logical they be, create not much effect. Softness is true strength. If only nations constantly at war realised this! The way of softness is the way of non-assertion. But war-dazed countries are not prepared to walk this way.

"What most of us call love, is not love; it is passion. True love springs from calmness. The centre of life is calmness. From this centre have sprung up all that you behold,—these trees and gardens, this whole universe. Our love is the expression of passion, of appetites and desires. But true love springs from the centre of calmness.

"The question arises: How may this love be realised? Two thoughts come to me in this connection. (1) What is the movement of this love? If its movement is for union with God then it is love of the right type. Saints yearn eagerly for a glimpse of God. Ramakrishna Paramahansa cried out once: 'If Thou do not reveal Thyself to me, I will put an end to my life.' He actually held a dagger in his hand and declared: 'I will kill myself with this dagger if I am not blessed by the Vision Divine.' And lo and behold! He was granted a vision.

"Sadhu Sundersing yearned intensly to behold God. Once he got up at three in the morning and said: 'My heart hungers for a glimpse of God. If I am not granted a vision I will throw myself on the railings and let the train which comes at 4.30 a. m. run over me! Wonder of wonders! Sadhu Sundersing was granted a vision a few minutes before 4.30 a.m.

"The primal movement within us is towards God. This movement towards God is the first essential note of true love. It is called pure act,—not action but act,—act, bereft of all change, bereft of all restlessness, bereft of all rajasic and tamasic qualities.

"The primal movement which proceeds out of calmness moves towards God. The second movement of true love is activity. Love should be expressed through activity, through service We need activity. Pure act is internal; activity is external. He, in whom both the movements are in harmony, the primal movement and the outer movement, is the Silent One. The Gita calls him a *sthita-pragnya* A *sanyasin* is not slothful. He is a man of action. But his activity is the manifestation of silence. Such a one goes out to teach. The listeners misbehave. But he remains calm and unperturbed. He is not excited. He serves the poor and remains calm. They try to disturb him, he remains undisturbed.

"Such a one beholds the One in all. Not for him exist distinctions of classes and creeds.

"Such a one wanders not, nor goes to places of pilgrimage He is a man of serenity.

"Self-inquiry is the first step. The next step is to touch the Root, the rootless Root. Silence is return to the Root. We are under the spell of Maya, which has hypnotised us We have to be de-hypnotised.

"A disciple of Lao Tsze has collected the teachings of his master. He called these 'Silence of the Soul'. It avails little if you close the doors while storm brews within, says Lao Tsze."

The Panday Cottage where Vaswaniji lived was no doubt a compact house, but it was too small a place for him to live in. Devotees in ever increasing numbers came to meet Vaswaniji to seek his blessings and guidance for their multifarious problems. Moreover the Panday Cottage was ill-ventillated. Vaswaniji had been used to living in spacious and open houses which had free access to the sun and air. Now that the Jeejeebhoy Castle had been acquired for the Mira Schools, Gangaram tried to persuade Vaswaniji to shift to Jeejeebhoy Castle.

The Jeejeebhoy Castle had a spacious ground with many tall trees. It had well-ventillated rooms with large windows through which the bright sunlight

filtered in. It had porches, verandahs and balconies, where one could sit in quiet and drink in the sunlight during the day-time and commune with the moon and stars by night. It commanded a beautiful view and besides was close to the railway station as well as the bus terminus.

Vaswaniji at last got the inner urge one day to move to Jeejeebhoy Castle. Everyone became happy beyond measure when Vaswaniji came to stay in Jeejeebhoy Castle, as his presence was a blessing.

Vaswaniji beheld God in the clouds of the sky and in the trees and flowers of the earth. He gazed at God's image reflected in the sun, moon, and stars, and in rivers, fountains, and pools. He found the faint prints of God's feet upon the grains of sand. Heavens whispered to him in his dreams and he could hear God's voice when he sat in silence. There was an air of serenity about him. Peace flowed from his presence. Therefore, was his presence a blessing.

A section on the first floor was allotted to Vaswaniji. He stayed in it with a small group consisting of Jashan, Sati, Shantri and myself on this condition that he paid Rs.75 per month as rent for his section. He had never been a burden upon any individual or association and would not consider staying without paying rent for the premises he occupied. The Mira Education Board accepted Vaswaniji's offer, though very unwillingly, as they were afraid he would otherwise leave the premises.

Parpati Malkani managed to get a hall for the Seva Kunj,—the work centre she had started,—in the Raj Mahal Hotel just across the road. Soon Jagatrai Issardas, a disciple of Swami Kalyandas, a Sindhi saint, sent to Vaswaniji four thousand rupees for the work centre and requested that the centre be named after Swami Kalyandas. This centre of work for girls and women thus came to be called "Kalyan Nari Shalla."

Vaswaniji sought to turn the thoughts of the people, who had been compelled to leave their native

place, from worldly cities and towns to the city that belonged to the Kingdom within. He once gave them this significant thought:

"What seekest thou?" they asked me.

I answered: "I seek the Holy City of Love, the City of the Saints, the City of Krishna and Jesus and Nanak."

"Where is it?" they asked.

I said: "In the heart of the pure and lowly!"

The devotees had left behind their possessions, properties, and status. In India, they had to start afresh and search for jobs, secure accomodation and face a thousand and one problems of everyday life. Invisible chains of bondage were upon them. Their yesteryears had been years of comfort and ease. But the chains of their todays and tomorrows hung heavy upon them Nevertheless, they recalled the message he had written for them. Their worried, wavering hearts were filled with the assurance that they were secure in God's hands

"Let me plan nothing. Is not my life in His hands? And He hath planned what is best for me. So I am not anxious for tomorrow. Each tomorrow is in His hands. And He knows best."

This message that he had written was meant more for each one of us than for Vaswaniji. Yes, human plans often go awry. The castles we build vanish in thin air, leaving behind in their wake painful memories. The birds of the air earn not nor hoard, nor are they worried about the morrow and yet are they cared for each day. Should we not also give up planning and cease to worry about the morrow?

Vaswaniji sought to assure his devotees that God never forsakes man. On the contrary, He is with us and within us; eager to share our lives and ready to bear our burdens.

Rightly did he remark once:

"In the chaos and disorder of these days, in a world marred and mangled, a broken and blood-

stained world, I say to all whom my voice may reach: Go to God : And He is not afar : He is within you."

(From "Little Flowers")

In the year 1952 the All-India Humanitarian Leauge planned to celebrate the All-India Animal Welfare Week in Bombay from September 29 to October 5 to arouse the conscience of the people to the ill-treatment meted out to birds and animals, our dumb and defenceless sisters and brothers. Mrs. Mehra Vakil, an active member of the League, came to Poona personally to press Vaswaniji to preside at the inaugural function. Vaswaniji did not have any inclination to visit Bombay in 1952. This enthusiastic worker however would not take "no" for an answer. So he consented.

The inaugural function of the All-India Animal Welfare Week was held at Green's Hotel, Apollo Bunder, in the midst of a cosmopolitan gathering. The waves tossed playfully in the Arabian Sea right outside the hotel. When Vaswaniji rose to speak it seemed as if he addressed not merely those assembled in the hall but also the waves of the sea and even the invisible spirits beyond.

Vaswaniji commenced his address in his characteristic style in a soft voice. When he ended it, his voice had risen and grown emphatic. Each concluding word of his speech was forceful, for he sought to inspire the members of the league with greater love for the dumb, defenceless creatures, whom he regarded as his brothers of the lower hierarchial order. He said:

"I recall what a Dutch novelist wrote many years ago:—'You are proud of your aeroplanes. But when will your soul have wings?'

"The wings of the soul are two,—wisdom and sympathy. Friends of the Animal Welfare Association! Build ye in sympathy and wisdom. Today we are so few. And in my heart awakes a lonely cry, as of the moaning of the sea, when I survey the situation of the world. I see its hardheartedness : I see its lack of

sympathy : I see how nations are wandering from violence to violence : I see how slaughter-houses are multiplying : I see how my brothers and sisters,—the animals,—are being slaughtered everyday! Friends of the Animal Welfare Association! you, too, sometimes feel lonely. But I remember, I come this evening to give you a message of hope. And to you I say:—Despair not! Work on in faith! Work on in hope! Work on, by day and by night! The great ones, the mighty teachers of humanity, are with you! The guardian angels are by you, to guard, to help, to bless and serve the weak and lonely. So work on and despair not! You will, one day, achieve! You will attain!"

During the course of his address, Vaswaniji gave valuable suggestions when he said:

"We speak of the rights of man; do we speak of the duties of man to the bird and the beast? I wished you of the Animal Welfare Association got together to formulate, as early as you can, a charter of animals' rights. And I wish you, also, to come together to formulate a charter of man's duties to the animal world.

"And further, I would humbly ask you to do what you can to influence students' opinion, youth opinion, in regard to animal welfare."

"Legislation, you say," he continued. "But what is legislation? What is the State? Legislation must work through men. And if your children are going to grow, in the years of their manhood, to be patriots of the true type, you must ask them to look with friendly eyes upon the bird and the beast."

The President of the Bombay Humanitarian League, Jamnadas Sethia, held a reception in honour of Vaswaniji in the Daya Mandir, where also Vaswaniji spoke. He placed emphasis on two points: (1) to work with students in the schools and colleges to inculcate in them the spirit of *maitri*,—compassion and mercy, and (2) the precedence of the spirit of humanitarianism over the spirit of sectarianism.

Now that Vaswaniji was once again in Bombay, various associations and groups invited him. He was also taken to various localities in Bombay, where displaced Sindhis had managed to procure a roof over their heads. His heart always went out to the suffering Sindhi sisters and brothers. It was with a sad heart that he sought to comfort them. The sadness rose to his lips and it became a part of his smile, for thenceforth one could ever feel a tinge of sadness in his smile.

"My eyes have been touched with tears whenever my thoughts have turned to you. Your sorrow hath entered my heart. And I have offered this prayer: O Lord! Do thou give relief to my sisters and brothers in their hour of anguish and pain!" Vaswaniji told them.

Vaswaniji was invited to visit Kolivada Refugee Camp where several displaced families from Sind were housed. Thousands collected on this occasion to have Vaswaniji's darshan. The fellowship meeting started with bhajans and namkirtan. Then followed Vaswaniji's discourse. The atmosphere was so surcharged with holy vibrations that a few of the brothers, who met him after his speech, expressed a desire that a regular centre in the colony be established where fellowship meetings could be held at least once a week. Eager as they were to experience the bliss of the satsang, they sought Vaswaniji's blessings. So a weekly satsang saw the light of the day. Khubchand Shivdasani, an ardent devotee and a sincere worker, was placed in charge of the centre. He continues to conduct the satsang till now.

A small beginning of the satsang in Bombay was thus made and the seed planted in Kolivada in time grew to be a tall-branched tree. Under its shade several sisters and brothers gradually met together every evening and participated in the namkirtan.

In 1956 the Bombay satsang centre was shifted from Kolivada to Colaba. Since 1959 this centre is being called the Mira Satsang.

In 1962 a public trust was registered under the

name of Mira Satsang Association and a building fund was started to enable the Association to have a premises of its own from where all the activities of the Mira Satsang could be carried out. On 10 April 1968 brother Jashan performed the opening ceremony of the new premises.

Some of the activities conducted under the auspices of the Mira Satsang Association are : publication of a monthly journel named "Jago", service of the poor and distressed; and regular fellowship meetings.

The Sindhis in the displaced persons' camps in Kalyan, located at a distance of about 55 kilometers from Bombay, were anxious that Vaswaniji pay their camps a visit and invited him. He declined for want of time. He had, however, paid a visit to Kalyan in 1949. Thousands had then thronged to behold the face of him who was all tenderness to those in misery. Crowds had then collected to listen to him who ever gave comradeship to the lonely.

In a voice that trembled with emotion, Vaswaniji had said:

"Even as I was coming here, I looked about me and around me. I looked at the trees. I lifted my eyes to the skies. I looked at the earth. And then I said to myself: There be One who accompanies me. Who may He be,—this Gaurdian of ours? He is Sri Krishna, *Daridra Narayana*,—the Friend of the poor. This Brother of the poor moves about. He wanders from place to place. This Guardian of the poor is by your side guarding you. He blesses you every day. He protects you in your moments of difficulty and distress. Therefore, be not disheartened, be not depressed, be not dejected."

"My eyes rain tears when I see the sad plight of my Sindhi sisters and brothers," he continued. "Do not lose hope. Within each one of you lies a latent force. Develop it. Placing the ideal of unity before you, move ye onward, forward, and Godward!"

During Vaswaniji's stay in Bombay, fellowship meetings were held every evening on the spacious

terrace of the Swastik Court in Colaba where he stayed. Men and women, young and old, came from various parts of Greater Bombay and joined in these gatherings. Many of the Mira ex-students and ex-teachers, scattered all over Bombay, too, came to seek Vaswaniji's blessings. Vaswaniji even addressed a special meeting of the members of the Mira family. Several of them, eager to visit Poona, expressed a desire that they should be invited and permitted to stay on the Mira Campus. Their attachment for their revered founder had increased with the passage of time. Even as exiles long for their hearths, these ex-students and ex-teachers yearned to sit at Vaswaniji's flowery feet and enjoy his holy company. They kept urging with their request everyday for the three weeks Vaswaniji was in Bombay.

As Deepavali was fast approaching, several devotees requested Vaswaniji to continue his stay in Bombay till this auspicious day. The devotees of Poona had already extracted from him the promise that he would be back with them on this sacred occasion. Since Deepavali is celebrated on two consecutive days, Vaswaniji could satisfy the devotees of Bombay as well as of Poona by spending the first day in Bombay and the second in the midst of the aspirants in Poona.

On the first day of the Deepavali, Vaswaniji addressed a gathering in Bombay, in which he paid a glowing tribute to Sri Rama. He said:

"The Ramayana is dear to the masses of India. Millions today worship Sri Rama in India. He hath become the Beloved of Aryavarta. The 'educated' classes in India are forgetful of India's heroes and India's ideals, of India's civilisation and symbols.

"Sri Rama hath become dear to the people of Russia and Sweden. A few years ago the people of Germany took to the study of Ramayana. Several years ago a king of Italy wanted to have the Ramayana translated into Italian.

"Bombay is full of huge buildings. It is a city of commerce. Ayodhya too had palatial buildings and was

a centre of trade. But how different is Bombay from Ayodhya! In Bombay many there be that starve, whereas the people of Ayodhya were provided with food and shelter. Not a single soul in Ayodhya went without food.

"Well may you say that I relate a fairy tale when I say so. But I do not exaggerate in the least. Take the example of Russia. Russia has boldly tackled the problem of poverty and provided food and shelter for all. Recently an Englishman visited Leningrad, the Capital of Russia. This Englishman wrote that in the whole of Leningrad he did not see a single person starve. In Bombay many go without food, yet others get but one bare meal a day. We take three meals a day and live in comfort. But, alas! our brethren starve. Ayodhya was a town of peace and prosperity. The three needs of life of the people of Ayodhya were satisfied. They were provided with food, clothing and shelter. They lived a life of prosperity. They remembered the Name Divine. Blessed was Ayodhya!"

Vaswaniji left Bombay for Poona on the morning of October 19, the second day of the Deepavali. With Vaswaniji's coming back to Poona, attendance in the satsang began to increase day by day. By this time Kala Kripalani, of sweet temperament and rich, melodious voice, started coming to the satsang and sang bhajans of saints and sages of India. Vaswaniji, for whom music was one of the delights of his life, on some occasions continued to stay in the Mira Hall long after the satsang was over, listening to song after song sung by Kala. The artist in him never grew tired of hearing sonorous strains.

The year 1952 seems to have been eventful in many other respects.

On 1 March 1952, St. Mira's Primary School saw the light of the day. Yet another institution, a charitable dispensary, which was a department of the Radhakrishna Daya Dispensary, was started on the Mira Campus in the month of September. The first Mira Camp, which would later become a part of

Vaswaniji's birthday celebrations, was also organised in 1952.

In 1952 Vaswaniji also started the weekly Gita Class in Poona, where he gave illuminating and inspiring talks in English.

On August 1 this year Vaswaniji received a telegram from Karachi containing the sad news about the passing away of his beloved friend, Jamshed Nusserwanji. The very next Gita class, scheduled for August 2, was held as a memorial meeting in which Vaswaniji paid a glowing tribute to Brother Jamshed. He ended his talk thus:

"I invoke his blessings upon you all. And I turn to him with affectionate salutations and say to him : 'Brother, thou art in the spiritual world which was so congenial to thy daily aspirations and life. Not finished art thy labours yet, beloved brother. We shall meet again,—you and I,—you, a Prophet of the poor, and I, an humble servant commissioned to wipe the tears of the widow and the orphan. We shall meet again. Fare on! Fare on! and bless thy brother who still is working on this plane!"

The Mira Union

The sacred November 25 of 1952, Vaswaniji's 73rd birthday, was fast approaching. Many of the devotees in Poona this year became vivacious and decided to celebrate the occasion with great enthusiasm. A three-day programme of celebration was chalked out. In time to come Vaswaniji's birthdays would be celebrated with eclat and enthusiasm not only in Poona but in several parts of India,—nay, even outside India.

The pleas of Mira ex-students that they should be invited to Poona kept ringing in my ears ever since my return from Bombay. The idea of holding a camp of ex-students and ex-teachers of Mira Schools was put to Vaswaniji who readily blessed the idea. The first Mira Camp was therefore held on the Mira Campus this year. Eighteen Mira ex-students and ex-teachers, who were spread all over India, came to Poona and joined in the first Mira Camp.

Members of the Mira family organised a variety entertainment on this blessed occasion.

An item in the programme was songs of the poet-saints of Sind. Listening to the songs, the eyes of quite a few among the audience were touched with tears as they were reminded of their native land, Sind,

and its heritage. Vaswaniji, too, was so deeply moved that he summoned the best singer, Sushila Jhangiani, and paid a compliment to her by saying: "You have brought tears to my eyes."

The best reward that a singer can aspire for is to bring tears to the eyes of the hearers. Sushila, in whose voice there is a lilt and melody of nightingales, felt a thrill when she heard that she had brought tears to even Vaswaniji's eyes.

Addressing the Mira Campers on this occasion, Vaswaniji said:

"Children of St. Mira! My thoughts have gone out to you oft times. How I wish you propagated the ideals of St. Mira's and helped the work of St. Mira's! Many are the dreams that lie locked within my heart. I have, no doubt, forgotten you on many an occasion, but I have not forgotten the dreams that dance in mine eyes and the hopes my heart harbours."

During the course of his talk Vaswaniji referred to beloved Sind, her singers and sages, her fakirs and dervishes. These, he said, were our richest treasure.

"With sacred sweet memories of the great ones of our beloved Sind, come to the camp every year. True heroism is to walk the way of the saints. Be servants of your society, your community, your country and be blessed. With humility in your hearts and with love for God build ye a New Society!" concluded Vaswaniji.

At the invitation of Vaswaniji, the Mira Camp became a regular feature of his birthday celebrations. Every year on November 23 a number of Mira girls would come to this "Haven of Peace" for three to four days from different parts of India to pay the homage of their hearts to Vaswaniji. Their revered founder was for many of them not merely a fountain of inspiration in their daily lives but also a solace in their times of difficulty and despair.

Despite the tiring program during the birthday celebrations, Vaswaniji would always spare sometime for the Mira Campers. It would almost look like a

family gathering,—daughters seated at the feet of their beloved father. Like a truly loving father, Vaswaniji would shower upon them his love and blessings in abundance. He would inspire them with the spirit of love and devotion for God and instil in them the spirit of service to fellowmen.

The Mira Camp became the forerunner of the Mira Union. It happened this way: many of the eighteen girls who had come to the first Mira Camp expressed a desire that an alumni of St. Mira's be formed so that they, who were spread all over the world, could keep in touch with each other to keep the flame of the Mira ideals burning.

The idea was put to Vaswaniji who liked it very much; in it he saw the seeds of a forum which could revolutionise the lives of some Mira girls. Revolution, according to Vaswaniji, was not the taking up of cudgels against the authority or the overthrow of the established order, but the re-valuation of the current ideals by which people live so as to bring in their lives a deeper meaning and the sprouting of inner urges towards the higher life.

Vaswaniji blessed this idea and named the grouping of Mira girls as the Mira Union. The objectives of the Mira Union include spreading Vaswaniji's message to distant places and waiting hearts, collecting contributions for Vaswaniji's birthday purse fund, serving the poor and the distressed, and helping the needy children. The Mira Union also seeks to inspire young impressionable minds with love for God, for Vaswaniji and for sages and saints of the East and West, by sowing seeds of the wonderful teachings of Vaswaniji. With this in view it started in 1971 *Bal-Kunjs* (classes for girls) in Poona and in Bombay.

Vaswaniji evinced keen interest in the activities of the Mira Union and blessed and encouraged its ventures. The Mira Union published two books by Vaswaniji, *St. Mira* in 1956, and *The Face of the Buddha* the following year. Year after year the Mira girls would collect donations towards Vaswaniji's birthday

purse fund. With every passing year the amount collected would increase till in 1957 the figure reached Rs. 20,000.

On 25 November 1952, a huge gathering of several of Vaswaniji's admirers,—men, women and children,—collected to felicitate him on his birthday. Many of his friends and admirers, who could not come to Poona for the occasion, sent congratulatory messages and telegrams.

Addressing the gathering on this occasion, Vaswaniji said:

"This day is to me a day of thanksgiving, of gratitude to God. It is a day of self-dedication to the Divine. In the twilight of my life I pray that I may be spent ever-increasingly in the service of God and man."

Vaswaniji brought his speech to a close on this note:

"It is the evening of my life. My boat is launched. I hear the birds singing from the Other Shore. And as a pilgrim, a wanderer to God, I move on with wonder in my eyes and with a song in my heart. It is the ancient song:—'Awake! Awake! O my Self, awake! Behold, the dawn is breaking in beauty! Sleep thou no longer! Awake! Awake!'"

There were times when Vaswaniji talked to his devotees informally and wrote out beautiful thoughts for them on cards. Brother Jashan would read these out and interpret these. Parents would bring their children on their birthdays to receive Vaswaniji's blessings. The young as well as the aged, the enlightened as well as the illiterate, enjoyed listening to the conversation between Vaswaniji and the children. Before leaving, the children would ask him to give them a birthday message which he would do immediately. Along with the message, he would give birthday gifts,—toys, books, pictures and biscuit tins. None would leave empty-handed.

In the cold wintry season, Vaswaniji sat everyday in the Mira compound in the "Temple of Trees" and

did his work. His dəvotecs, who never missed an opportunity of being by him, came and sat at his feet. Several of them merely sat and gaxed at his beauteoes face. It was on an ordinaty chair that he sat, but he looked so majestic!

Whenever visitors sought an interview, Vaswaniji would often meet them in the morning hours in the Mira Compound. Devotees felt exceedingly happy then, as they got the opportunity to listen to his voice and to hear his words which may be likened to beauteous pearls and to gems of the purest ray serene.

It was in the Mira Compound that some Cowley Fathers from London met Vaswaniji. Father B. Dalby, Superior General of the St. John the Evangelist, Oxford; Father Wann; Maribel, C.S.M.V., Mother General of the community of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage; and Sister May, C.S.M.V. were all the more impressed when they had a talk with him. Vaswaniji spoke of St. Francis and his ideals of obedience, chastity and poverty. "True renunciation," he told them, "lies in living a life of poverty. St. Francis, who became a fakir, teaches us that the life of poverty is indeed the life beautiful. And it is the life beautiful that possesses the strength to draw souls."

Before the year 1952 came to a close, Vaswaniji addressed two important meetings which were attended by people of various communities and faiths.

One of the meetings was held on December 9 in connection with a group of fifty American and Canadian members of the "India Study Tour Party." The party consisted of social workers, ministers and educationists.

"The Indian masses must have bread and homes to live before true India can give her message of world peace, of compassion to all creatures, of the harmony of East and West and the fellowship of all races and prophets and saints in the one divine mother, humanity," observed Vaswaniji during the course of his speech.

Vaswaniji also spoke of the triple India,—the India of noisy cities, the India of the villages and the India of the sages He advised the party to visit the

villages and meet the village-folk in order to know what real India was. "Hungry are my people," he said, "and many are without homes. So many die of cholera and malaria and dysentry every year. Yet they have not lost hope. They believe in the Great Law and in the Divine Spirit that presides over all governments of the world. And they believe in that true democracy which affirms the truth that God is down among the people."

(From "Mira : East & West" Vol. 11)

The other important meeting was the first annual function of St. Mira's High School which was presided over by Mrs. Ellen Watumall, Chairman of the Watumall Foundation of Honolulu, Hawaii Islands.

During the course of his speech at the annual function, Vaswaniji said:

"We are met together on a day which is, to some of us, a day of thanksgiving. The seventh of December is associated with the memory of a great Sindhi,—Rishi Dayaram Gidumal,—a truly great one, who believed in the very ideal which the Mira school is trying to work out. He was a patriot and a philanthropist, a rishi and a teacher. Almost 30 years have passed since he left the world : his life still doth sing to us like some old ineffable melody. His life was a hymn of service to Him who sent him. May his spirit continue to bless the Mira School! And may the inspiration of his life lead us on! The Sindhi community is passing through a period of darkness and confusion. And I breathe out an aspiration, that the mighty spirit of this great one may enter, more and more, into our lives that we may be led out of the ashes of hopes and fears to where our destiny calls us in the coming days!"

Vaswaniji closed his speech on this note:

"Character is the one urgent need of India today. And so, again and again, I pray in my heart the prayer of the Poet:—'God, give us men!' God, give us men, whom the lust of office will not betray; men whom the gains of office will not lead astray; men who will

serve using their powers in a spirit of humility, in the best interests of the poor. God, give us men,—God, give us men,—strong men, sun-crowned men, not men who mingle in selfish strife, while freedom sleeps."

(From "Mira . East & West" Vol. 11)

A Generous Gift

The activities under Vaswaniji's guidance were growing year after year. A need of a band of selfless and enthusiastic workers therefore became a pressing necessity. Dr. Hashmatrai Thadhani, a man of spiritual inclinations and an active member of the satsang in Karachi, who too had settled down in Poona, came forward and organised a band of earnest and enterprising young men. Vaswaniji was requested to bless the group and suggest a name for it.

Vaswaniji named the group as Mohan Mandali and in his address to the group placed before it the two-fold ideal of (1) Love of God and (2) Service of the poor.

The Mohan Mandali, from time to time, organised get-togethers where they invited Vaswaniji and other members of the satsang. At these gatherings Vaswaniji often addressed them and placed before them the high ideal of service. He urged the members to do little deeds of loving service. He also advised them to study the lives of saints and bhaktas and to aspire to become servants of Sri Krishna. Often, fellowship meals would be served to members and invitees at these gatherings.

On one occasion Vaswaniji related an inspiring

anecdote from the life of Guru Amardas. He said:

"At the age of seventy, Guru Amardas became a disciple of Guru Angad. Everyday at the early hour of the dawn he would walk several miles to river Beas just to fetch a pitcher of fresh water for his Master's bath. While performing this deed of service he kept reciting *Sri Jap Saheb*. Tears ever flowed from his eyes. And when the time of Guru Angad's departure from this world comes, everyone in the sangat feels that Amardas should succeed him. This comes to the knowledge of Datu, Guru Angad's son. He feels infuriated. He at once goes to Amardas and bursts out saying : 'Amru! You are my father's servant. A servant is not worthy to become a successor.' And he kicks him. But Amardas is a man of utter humility. He at once falls at Datu's feet and says: 'Your feet must have been hurt. Let me massage them.' Guru Amardas hath become *amar*. He is immortal."

"Service of the guru in the spirit of humility," Vaswaniji continued, "leads the seeker along the path of spiritual life."

On this occasion, Vaswaniji joined the band of servers. When the guests sat down for meals, Vaswaniji distributed the *patals*,—disposable plates made of leaves. After partaking of food, the guests went out to wash their hands and drink water. To their amazement they found Vaswaniji there, too, waiting by the drum to serve water.

The satsangis felt it a privilege to drink water served by Vaswaniji. They called one and all and asked them to take Ganga-jal (pure Ganges water) from his holy hands. Water, coming from the hands of the gurudev, becomes pure and sacred as the water of the Ganges river,—so purifying is the touch of a saint.

With the good work the Mohan Mandali was doing, a need of such an organisation for sisters was soon felt. Parpati Malkani formed such a group. She too requested Vaswaniji to give it a name. He named it Hari Nivas.

On the occasion of the Holi, when the season of

spring is in full bloom, when nature becomes buoyant and gay, the Hari Nivas group organised a meeting where fellowship meals were served. Vaswaniji attended this gathering.

"Your presence here, Beloved Dadaji, is a blessing. On this sacred occasion of the Holi, we ask of you, who are our teacher and guide, to take us along the spiritual path," said one of the members by way of greeting.

Vaswaniji was deeply touched by these words, spoken on behalf of the Hari Nivas. On this sacred day, his thoughts as usual were full of Sri Krishna, the Lord of Love and the sacred Jamuna river, on the banks of which the Flute Player had played the *leela* of His life. Referring to Sri Krishna in the course of his address to the Hari Nivas group, he said : "Be humble and strive to serve in the spirit of humility. May you, members of the Hari Nivas group, form a band of the humble ones! You will be united in the measure in which you are humble. Form ye a band of real *sevakas* (servants). Therefore, stand united. Sri Krishna pours His blessings in abundance upon those who come together in His Name and stand united."

Several local groups and associations of Hindus, Christians as well as Muslims invited Vaswaniji to address their gatherings, which he often did. Even the Muslims of his beloved native land, Sind, remembered him and invited him for a visit. In the year 1957, on the occasion of the 203rd anniversary of Shah Latif, the poet, Hatim Alvi, Ex-Mayor, Karachi Municipal Corporation, and G. M. Sayed, Ex-chief Minister of Sind, invited him to visit Sind and join in the celebrations. Vaswaniji did not accept the invitation, but sent them a message. Excerpts from the message are reproduced here-under:

It is a joy to me to know that beloved Sind is celebrating the day sacred to Shah Latif. I wished I could come there physically to join you in the great celebrations. I feel sure that though my body fails me, I am with you all in spirit. To you both, beloved

brothers, and to all others who in love and reverence are meeting together in different parts, I believe, of my beloved Sind, to pay homage to his thrice-blessed memory, I send my affectionate salutations.

In him many silent centuries of beloved Sind find a voice. A Singer, a Sage, a Lover of the peasant, a Brother to all the poor and lowly ones who live in broken cottages with God above and Heart within, Shah Latif remains the peerless Poet and Seer of the Desert. I sang to myself his songs in my travels in Europe, many years ago, as I sing to myself his lyrics in my exile here. I count him as an Artist and a Lover with a world-message. Singing his lyrics, I have recalled the saying of a great writer:—"Let me make the songs of a people and I care not who makes their laws."

Once again I bow in reverence to the great Poet-Saint,—one of the greatest, I believe, among the Poet-Saints of the East or West. And I ask myself:—"He did so much for us : what have we done for him?"

Principal Bhat of the M. E. S. College requested Vaswaniji to preside at the annual function of the college. Vaswaniji's heart always went out to the youths and he readily accepted. Principal Bhat bowed before Vaswaniji as if to seek his blessings and introduced him to the college students as his gurudev.

In his address, Vaswaniji said to the students: "I believe in the young. And over and over again have I sent out to you, young men of Maharashtra, the love of my heart. I believe the future is in your hands. The voice of the future calleth you. I know not if you hear the voice. You may forget much what I may speak to you this evening. But remember this : the future calleth you. The voice of the future calls you to consecrated work,—of the service of India,—in the coming days."

The young men listened to the gurudev of their Principal in rapt attention. They seemed to be transported to an entirely different world. They came out of it when Vaswaniji ended his speech by

bidding the young men to cultivate the soul, in the words of the German writer, Rathenau.

Vaswaniji, after a few days, opened a fete organised by Christian friends. In his inaugural speech, he referred to Jesus, to Krishna and to their teachings. Both had spoken of "offering unto God." Their festival, he said, was an offering to God.

With the activities growing in number, Gangaram, brother Jashan and some others felt that the Brotherhood Association, under which Vaswaniji had canalised all the activities, should have a premises of its own. They contemplated purchasing a big plot of land for the purpose of constructing buildings for various institutions being run under the aegis of the Brotherhood Association. Vaswaniji, however, felt that instead of searching for another plot and going in for new construction, the Jeejeebhoy Castle itself should be purchased.

Mrs. Jeejeebhoy, a Parsi lady, who owned the estate, would not entertain any offer to sell the property. Hotchand Gopaldas, the Working Chairman of the Mira Education Board, an eminent lawyer of. Bombay, and a man of tact and ability, soon took up the thread of negotiations with Mrs. Jeejeebhoy Later he was joined by Mrs. Rukmani Punjabi any Acharya Karve in the negotiations. Mrs. Jeejeebhoy was ultimately persuaded to sell the property to the Brotherhood Association for Rs. 5,45,000.

The Brotherhood Association did not have enough funds to pay for the purchase of the Jeejeebhoy Castle. The money had therefore to be raised by way of donations from friends and well-wishers.

Tanumal Mirchandani interested Smt. Ramibai Bhagwansing, Managing Trustee of the Basantsing Amil Dharmada Trust, for a contribution towards, the building fund. The trustees decided to give a munificient donation of Rs. 1,50,000 on condition that the building be named after Dhamibai Basantsing, —the revered mother of the founder of the Trust.

At the meeting of the Mira Education Board, presided over by Vaswaniji, the Board gratefully

accepted the donation. At the express desire of Vaswaniji, the Board passed the following resolution:—

Grateful is the Mira Education Board to Basantsing Amil Dharmada Trust and its Honoured President, Shrimati Ramibai Bhagwansing, for their rich contribution to the cause of education and social welfare in this dark day,—perhaps the darkest in the destiny of our beloved community. This gift of a lakh and a half (Rs. 1,50,000) is incomparably richer as it comes from a Trust associated with the memory of Sri Basantsing,—a Trust too which is a symbol of the life and labours of Sri Bhagwansing,—one of the noblest sons of modern India. His was truly a dedicated life. He was a worthy successor to the great Builders and Inspirers of modern Sind. Generations unborn, we believe, will bless him as a Herald of the future. Alas! the Sindhi Community wanders in the night. It is our hope that St. Mira's School may reflect the best of the traditions of Sind and may help in making the ideals and inspirations of India living realities in the thoughts and aspirations of an ever-increasing number of young Sindhis.

We trust that the spirit of dedication, to which Sri Bhagwansing bore witness in sunshine and in rain, will be our hope and strength in all our efforts and activities to re-build our Beloved Community. So help us God!

(From "Mira: East & West": Vol. 16)

In 1958 Vaswaniji would receive an equivalent amount, Rs. 1,50,000 as birthday gift from his numerous disciples and devotees, friends and followers.

During the years 1953-58, saints like Meher Baba and Swami Ramdas, holy personalities such as Dilip Kumar Roy and Sai Rochaldas came to meet Vaswaniji in the Dhamibai Basantsing Building. Several other men of light and leading as well paid him their respects. Prof. Jean Herbert of the Geneva University; Woodland Kahler, President, World Organisation of Culture and Member, Executive Committee of the International Vegetarian Union

and upon whom the Government of India conferred the award of Prani Mitra in 1972, and Mrs. Kahler; Sardar Hukum Singh, Deputy Speaker, Loksabha, met Vaswaniji.

St. Mira's High School, which was functioning since 1950, was for the children of the Sindhi community. Soon a need for a school where children of all communities could be admitted was felt. So in 1958 St. Mira's English Medium School was started, where education was imparted through the medium of English. The doors of the Mira Campus were thus opened to children of other communities.

For some years past Vaswaniji had felt the need of a Gita Bhavan on the Mira Campus which would bear witness to the ideals of communion with God and fellowship with the poor. Mrs. Sulachhini Satramdas, who hosted Vaswaniji and his group in Calcutta in 1944 and had now settled down in Poona, came to know of Vaswaniji's desire. She donated Rs. 50,000 for this purpose. When in 1964 the work of the construction of the Gita Bhavan started and Mrs. Sulachhini learnt that the cost of construction would exceed Rs.50,000, she donated a further amount of Rs.25,000.

Brother Jashan who had devoted his life to the service of Vaswaniji felt the need of a journal to take Vaswaniji's message to places near and far. He started a monthly periodical, the East and West Series, in which he published writings of Vaswaniji.

In 1958, Vaswaniji's nephew, Ram, who had gone to U.S.A. six years back, returned to India on a brief visit. On September 30, he got married to Gopi Gulrajani, B. A., a Mira ex-student. Dr. Ram's wedding was solemnised according to ancient Vedic rites in an ideal atmosphere of sanctity and solemnity, which Vaswaniji had always wished for such occasions.

Ram had a brilliant academic career; he had topped the list of successful candidates at the Bachelor of Engineering examination of the University of Bombay in 1941. He had been awarded University Scholarship for further studies in U. K. But as the Second World

War was raging at that time, he could not avail of the same. In 1952, Ram was granted the Fullbright Scholarship for further studies in U. S. A. He finished his doctorate of Engineering at the University of Columbia. Dr. Ram is at present working as Senior Instructor, I. B. M. Systems, Science Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dr. Ram is the only member of the Vaswani family to have entered into holy wedlock and kept the thread of the family alive. He is blessed with two children,—a daughter, Sheila, and a son, Kumar.

The years 1953-58 were for Vaswaniji years of activity as well as illness, of ceaseless love for humanity, of immense courage and of infinite patience. Once in April 1954 he suffered from ulcer trouble. His condition was so serious that he was rushed to the Coyajee Nursing Home at dead of night. Despite the combined efforts of Doctors Coyaji and Grant, his health deteriorated further. He was therefore brought back to the Dhamibai Basantsing Building, where under the loving care and treatment of Dr. Motwani, Vaswaniji's condition improved. All the while his numerous devotees kept watch with intense anxiety and prayed earnestly for his good health and long life. After 22 weeks, he recovered from illness.

The day that Vaswaniji once again came and sat in the Mira Hall after such a long absence, was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving. The devotees expressed their joy and gratitude by distributing *prasad* in the satsang. Many of them gave Vaswaniji cash contributions also to be spent in the service of the poor and distressed, who, they knew, were dear to his heart.

Ekamevadityam!

It was the month of August, of the year 1959. The Janmashtami was fast approaching. This day had a special significance for Vaswaniji, for, on this day, Sri Krishna was born five thousand years ago. Vaswaniji expressed a desire that the day be celebrated with added fervour and enthusiasm and suggested that the children of Mira Schools be mobilised to organise a Brindaban Bazaar and perform Sri Krishna Lila.

A three days' programme was therefore chalked out for the Janmashtami celebrations wherein students of Mira Schools played a prominent part. The bazaar, which was organised on the Mira Campus, was declared open on the first day by N. P. Mathrani, Vice-Chairman, Mira Education Board. Earlier in the day, Vaswaniji had called all the children of Mira Schools and given each of them a 25 paise coin as pocket money so that they could purchase eatables and enjoy the day all the more. It was indeed a gala day for Mira children who enjoyed to their hearts' content.

On the second day the students of the Mira Schools enacted scenes from the lives of Sri Krishna and His devotees like Radha, Narada and Surdas, in the presence of Vaswaniji and several hundreds of his devotees.

The atmosphere on all the three days of the Janmashtami celebrations was surcharged with great enthusiasm and holy vibrations seemed to flow out from Vaswaniji which added a special charm and beauty to the entire programme.

On the Janmashtami day devotees gathered for worship in the morning in the Mira Hall. Worship over, the poor and needy were served. In the evening fellowship meeting Vaswaniji gave a discourse on Sri Krishna. His talk that day was extraordinarily inspiring and exuded wonderful zest.

"I love to think of Sri Krishna as Dada Shyam," Vaswaniji said. "Sri Krishna is our Dada, our Elder Brother. He is the Brother of all men, of all nations and of all races. He is the Brother of birds and beasts; sun, moon and stars; and mountains, rocks and rivers. This great Wandering Brother moves to bestow love upon the lowly and the lost, to impart solace to those that are sick and groan in pain, to comfort the forsaken and the forlorn, to heal the sick and to give the sympathy of His heart to the bereft and the bereaved."

"At the feet of Dada Shyam I have sat, again and and again and received of Him His gift of love and grace. Do thou likewise," Vaswaniji said in conclusion.

The three days' programme had tired Vaswaniji. Inspite of the strain, he however addressed the meeting of the Gita Class, which he had been conducting every night since about three months. As the Gita Class came to a close he felt exhausted. He expressed it to many a devotee who came to him for blessings. He soon retired for the night.

Early next morning, at 4-00 a.m. to be precise, Vaswaniji got up from sleep. As he was going out of his room, his foot slipped and he fell down unconscious.

Dr. Hiranand and his son, Dr. Narain, were sent for. They gave Vaswaniji coramine drops to revive him. Dr. N. R. Motwani, an eminent orthopaedist, was also called. On cursory examination, he suspected a crack in the femur bone. The X-Ray examination confirmed this.

For full six weeks, Vaswaniji was confined to bed in his room. He had already been suffering from twitches in the leg for several months. Under the pressure of the twitches, the femur bone soon got dislocated, which resulted in terrific pain and restless nights. The shooting pains in the leg would not let Vaswaniji sleep either at night or during the day. But amidst all the suffering there was an unusual smile on his face and the one word that constantly escaped from his lips was "Shukur"—"Gratitude to Thee, O Lord!"

If the word "Shukur" was on Vaswaniji's lips, from the hearts of his devotees rose silent prayers day and night that their Master be restored to health. This time they were all deprived of even the sight of his face, because of the doctors' strict orders. They had to rest content with peeping at him when the door of his room was kept partially open. They sat outside his room with grim faces. Their hearts were homes of silent prayers.

The twitches were at last brought under control by ayurvedic treatment. Soon Vaswaniji's health improved slightly. And this true Aryan and ardent admirer of nature had himself brought out in the verandah in the sunshine. He could thus view the open sky and the trees and flowers. It was not possible for him to walk, so his devotees brought him out on the cot. The first time he was brought out of his room, Dr. Motwani was present to supervise the movements. Henceforth Vaswaniji would be lifted either on a wooden cot or a chair with a specially made foot-board for resting his feet and with long arms for devotees to carry the chair. Nevermore would his holy feet tread over the ground. He, who was so fond of taking long walks, would now depend upon the feet of others, who would sometimes carry him on the chair over long distances.

The first day Vaswaniji ventured out and met his devotees he was asked to give a message. "Never be tired in service of Nama—the Name Divine," wrote

this true *sevaka*, this true servant of God, who was also a *sipahi*, a soldier of the spirit. However rigorous and irksome be the duty of a soldier, he never feels tired. It then behoves not a voluntary and willing servant of God to grow tired in the service of the Nama. Vaswaniji longed to listen to the Nama, repeat and recite the Nama, sing and chant the Nama, and serve the poor who are but broken pictures of the Nama.

When the news of Vaswaniji's ill-health reached his sister and brother, who had settled down in Hathras after the partition, they came to Poona to be beside him. They reached Poona on the sacred Deepavali day, the day of reunion and rejoicing. The sister and the brother were meeting their Dada after a separation of nearly a decade.

Vaswaniji's eightieth birthday was fast approaching and the devotees looked forward to the joy of celebrating it. However, his uncertain health was a source of great anxiety to them. But their zeal would not let them remain inert A programme was chalked out and appeal for the purse fund was made as usual.

A few days previous to this sacred day, Vaswaniji made alarming statements, to the utter dismay of his devotees. On November 19, Vaswaniji wrote a poem plunging the hearts of those who heard it in gloom and depression. He wrote:

I know not if I shall walk again,
These streets and parks and gardens fair!
I know not, O God of Roses and Lotuses and
Daisies sweet!
If I shall walk again
These ancient paths of Thy beauteous realm:
I know not if I shall gaze again
On the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, radiant with
Thy Light.
I do but feel I shall be again
Where Thou still dost shine,
And where Thou art, Beloved! I, too, shall in
Thee abide:

And Thou still wilt give me work to do,—
Thy work, Thy service,—and I shall sing Thy song
Of Holy Love:—"*Ekamevadityam!*"

Vaswaniji's statements and the news of his ill-health spread swiftly. Several Sindhis scattered all over India were afraid that Vaswaniji may not live long. So on his eightieth birthday, a large number from several cities, towns and villages came to Poona to have, what they felt, would be his last darshan.

On November 23, Vaswaniji suffered yet another reverse in his health. He caught severe pneumonia. The doctors declared his condition critical. The news filled the hearts of the devotees with unusual dread. But they despaired not. They knocked ceaselessly at the door of God to grant Vaswaniji many more years of life. They started Akhand Paths of Guru Granth Sahib, Sri Sukhmani and Dukh Bhanjani (destroyer of misery). Doctors attended to their work of administering medicine and giving injections, while recitations from the scriptures continued all the twenty four hours of day and night.

On November 25, devotees gathered together on the Mira Campus in thousands. Most of them had come from different parts of India to have Vaswaniji's darshan. Doctors had advised against putting Vaswaniji to any kind of strain as it would impair his already feeble physical condition. But devotees started collecting from 8-00 a.m., and by 10-00 a.m., the scheduled time of the morning satsang, the entire hall and the passages were overcrowded.

It was difficult to deny the people darshan of Vaswaniji that day as many had come from long distances. So, with the permission of the doctors, it was decided to bring Vaswaniji on his cot just outside his room, and hold satsang there so that at least some could have his darshan.

Vaswaniji was brought out of his room shortly after 10-00 a.m.—that day, and satsang began. After bhajans and kirtan, Vaswaniji asked brother Jashan

to read out a few slokas from Chapter 18 of the Bhagavad Gita and speak a few words.

During the course of his speech, brother Jashan related a significant dream he had had on the previous night. He said:—

"It was the dark hour of the night. I was fast asleep. In my sleep I travelled in the land of dreams. All of a sudden, I saw something strange. I saw a radiant aerial chariot being brought by some shining ones. These celestial beings brought the chariot to Beloved Dadaji (Vaswaniji) and requested him to get into the chariot. Beloved Dadaji barely stepped into the chariot, when it started to ascend. I was gazing at the ascending chariot when, methinks, I heard a voice whisper in my ears: 'Fool! Why stand you thus? Cling to the wheel of the chariot and follow Beloved Dadaji.' "

"I immediately caught hold of the wheel of the chariot as it passed by," brother Jashan continued. "The chariot went on ascending. Driven by the celestial beings, the chariot passed from one plane to the other, till it crossed the six planes and entered the seventh. I could see naught in this plane where darkness was but by darkness met.

"Soon I heard a Voice. 'What hast thou brought with thee?' the Voice asked Beloved Dadaji. 'Hast thou fulfilled thy mission?'

"And I heard Beloved Dadaji reply: 'I journeyed through many a city and town on earth, and visited many a hamlet and village. But not one soul did I come across in whom I fain could enkindle the Light.'

"The Voice then said to Beloved Dadaji: 'Then go back! Return to the land from where thou hast come. For not yet is thy task over. Go back and kindle Light in the lives of some who are ready and waiting.' "

The people went mad with joy as brother Jashan finished the story of his dream. Some even shed tears which come out of the fulness of joy. They felt assured that the beloved of their hearts, Vaswaniji, would remain in their midst for some years to come as his work on this earth plane was not yet over.

Brother Jashan's speech was followed by the arati song. The song over, the doors of Vaswaniji's room were closed.

At 4-00 p.m., devotees started collecting on the Mira grounds for the evening satsang which was scheduled for 6-00 p.m. This time Vaswaniji was brought down in the pandal so that all the devotees could have his darshan. The devotees were requested however that none should come near Vaswaniji. Vaswaniji sat in the pandal for about 15 minutes only during which Mathrani presented him a purse on behalf of the Birthday Purse Fund Committee. Vaswaniji was touched to learn that his devotees had collected Rs. 2,60,000 for the purse fund. As usual, he passed on the entire amount to the Brotherhood Association.

Late in the evening, with the permission of the doctors, the door of Vaswaniji's room was kept open and brothers and sisters filed past in front of the cot on which Vaswaniji sat reclined. As Vaswaniji did not have enough strength even to return the pranams of the endless stream of people who had collected to have his darshan, he smiled at each one of them. The devotees went away, treasuring in their hearts his mystic smile, which had breathed out a benediction, while they in turn invoked the Almighty to grant him good health and long life.

Vaswaniji's mind never seemed to be clouded by his physical sufferings. His cheerful smile at times even served to dispel the gloom of his near and dear ones. His spiritual prowess and selfless love triumphed over the pain of illnesses. During these last few weeks Vaswaniji grew considerably weak. Even though he recovered from pneumonia soon enough, he kept suffering from one aliment or the other.

On December 25, his face grew pale and his body became emaciated owing to profuse bleeding. Expert physicians attended on him and gave blood transfusion. Dr. Hiranand spent nights in the Dhamibai Basantsing Building to be by Vaswaniji and to serve him.

On December 27, Vaswaniji's physical condition took a turn for the worse. His blood report was startling as blood urea had increased to 120 mgs. He was also running temperature. His blood report coupled with the temperature caused anxiety to many a devotee. Vaswaniji however did not show much concern for his physical condition and the usual smile played upon his lips.

On December 29, the haemoglobin trouble disappeared, and along with it disappeared the depression of the devotees. As for Vaswaniji, he was his usual self, calm and serene.

17 January 1960 was the Lohri day, which the Hindus celebrate by burning huge logs. Vaswaniji, who never missed the chance of looking at the scarlet flames of fire on this night as they soared high, expressed a desire to be taken to the verandah.

The doctors stayed around while Vaswaniji was taken out of his room. Devotees already had gathered to have his darshan. After doing pranams to them, he cast, in his child-like manner, a loving look at the trees and flowers and remarked: "Nature too, hath a healing touch". Later he wrote this thought:

Behold! The world is a Garden of God.
Listen! Every leaf and flower, every plant and tree doth sing the Bhagavad Gita,—the Song of the Lord.

That evening, he lit the sacred fire of the Lal Loui, with his own hands. The fire lit by Vaswaniji was taken downstairs to ignite the logs placed in a ditch, specially dug for the occasion. For six years more only Vaswaniji would continue to behold the flames of the Lal Loui he loved so much. Precisely after six years on 17 January 1966, his physical body would be cremated on the Mira Campus and his mortal coil would be consumed by and become one with the scarlet flames of the *agni*.

As Vaswaniji's health improved, he met the devotees twice everyday, morning and evening, when satsang was held. The first evening he was requested to give

a message. Though he did not have enough strength, to please devotees, he said: "Meet and greet one another in the spirit of compassion and love. Unhappy is the world. Kindle ye the light of compassion and love!"

A poor man met him and finding him sympathetic, said: "I come to you for help, O friend of the friendless! Give me something, for my children and I starve."

Vsawaniji gave twenty five rupees to this poor man, who left rejoicing.

The man had been asking for only three rupees that very morning. When someone mentioned about it to Vaswaniji he did not feel sorry. On the contrary he remarked: "I am surprised that the poor ask for so little!"

3 March 1960 was a blessed day when Vaswaniji was brought down on his chair which his devotees lifted with infinite love and care. It was after a period of over six months that he was coming down. He was taken to the Council Hall and seated under the ancient skies and the tree under which he sat so often when he was able to walk. The branches of the tree swayed while the leaves rustled in joy as if to greet Vaswaniji. A fragrant wind fanned the devotees, as they seated themselves in a semicircle with Vaswaniji at the centre.

The devotees, whose only thought and wish was to be by Vaswaniji so that they could look at him and drink in the beauty of his face, felt deeply indebted to God. As a token of their love for him and as a mark of gratitude to God, who in His mercy had improved Vaswaniji's health, they approached him one by one and placed some amount in his hands. The collection came to Rs. 710/-.

How could the tree, that had been a silent witness to this scene, lag behind in placing its offering? Did not the tree love this lover of nature and did it not too feel grateful to God for having brought him there once again? In the presence of all, a leaf separated itself from a twig of the tree and fell at Vaswaniji's feet. What better offering than this,—a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a cup of water?

Three Great Souls Meet

Five thousand years ago child Krishna had celebrated the nature festival of Holi in Brindaban by squirting red powder and coloured water on the gopis and gopas, who always felt happy whenever he teased them. All that these simple souls sought was child Krishna's love and attention. As nature, mad in mirth, sprinkled dust on Mother Earth, so too did the Lord of Nature squirt red powder on His comrades.

The day of Holi is also sacred for on this day was born Nimai, who later came to be known as Lord Gauranga or Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Five hundred years ago Nimai came to enkindle in the hearts of countless human beings the spark of Krishna-prem and Krishna-bhakti,—love and devotion for Lord Krishna.

Vaswaniji celebrated the Holi festival every year. On the Holi of 1960 he gave the red kum-kum mark on the foreheads of his devotees. The devotees rejoiced for their Master was blessing them through the holy tilak mark. But Vaswaniji was not satisfied with filling the hearts of his devotees only with joy. Celebrations for him were incomplete unless he fed and clothed the poor and the downtrodden. On this Holi day, while he was sitting under a tree outside the

Council Hall, a few fakirs gathered around him. An ill-clad fakir, apparently an eccentric, stepped forward and asked Vaswaniji for some clothes. He at once started taking off his own coat to offer it to the fakir, when a devotee suggested that the fakir might be happier to receive a shirt to cover his naked body rather than his coat. Another devotee rushed to the Dhamibai Basantsing Building and brought a few shirts. Vaswaniji selected one and gave it to the fakir who was overjoyed.

Seeing how glad the fakir felt, in his child-like way, Vaswaniji gave him another shirt. The fakir's intense joy and surprise became visible on his face. Noticing the joy the fakir felt, Vaswaniji gave him two more shirts. This was beyond the fakir's comprehension. He lifted his eyes towards the sky as if to offer a silent prayer to Him on high for having brought him face to face with the very picture of love and compassion.

Vaswaniji, who had more shirts, gave yet one more to the fakir. In all his life the fakir had never come across such a donor who never seemed to grow tired of giving. Vaswaniji had a few more shirts left with him and as there were a few other fakirs besides, he gave a shirt and a rupee note to each of them.

On returning from the Council Hall, some devotees requested Vaswaniji to give a discourse in the evening satsang The last time Vaswaniji had given a discourse was on the occasion of the Janmashtami day, nearly six months ago. He had then spoken of Lord Krishna as Dada Shyam. This evening Vaswaniji spoke of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The devotees felt thrilled since Vaswaniji spoke after a lapse of six months. A few of them, who had spent sometime in Brindaban, where child Krishna had played the leela of his life, felt such a magnetic influence flowing from Vaswaniji, that listening to him in the Mira Hall, they felt transported once again to the groves of Brindaban.

Acharya Karve had become the Chairman of the Mira Education Board. His 103rd birthday was fast

approaching. Vaswaniji expressed a desire that the Acharya be felicitated on his birthday by St. Mira's High School. A special meeting was accordingly held on April 18 in which Vaswaniji also was present.

Vaswaniji greeted Karve warmly and accorded him a rich welcome. In the course of his speech he said:

"He cometh! The Beloved cometh! Maharshi Karve is come! With the benedictions of love, the Beloved cometh here today! And so I rejoice with you all in greeting him, Acharya Karve, the Beloved of our heart!

"Maharishi Karve is one of the builders of the destiny of Maharshatra and I come and seek the blessings of this simple man,—the Man of Destiny."

Ever since the fall in which Vaswaniji's femur bone cracked and was subsequently dislocated, he could not move about on his own, nor could he sleep at night even for an hour at a stretch. He had to be helped very frequently in turning over from one side to the other.

In the beginning brother Jashan was in constant attendance upon Vaswaniji, day and night. In Vaswaniji's words, brother Jashan took care of him "even as my father would take care of me." But soon the strain of rendering personal service to Vaswaniji by day as well as night began to tell upon brother Jashan's health as he could hardly get any rest during the day or sleep during nights. So Atma volunteered to keep awake a part of the night. But as Atma had to attend office during the day, it was soon felt that the strain of working during the day and keeping awake at night would break down his health too. Consequently there arose a need of a band of young men who would render personal service to Vaswaniji during the nights in turns. So Atu Relwani and Pamo Manchandia were added to the group. The last to join the group were Santsingh Shahani and Vashi Punjabi. Santsingh was over fifty years of age while Vashi was not even twenty.

Atu Relwani, a Science graduate of the Banaras Hindu University, came under the mystic influence of Vaswaniji way back in Karachi. He was ninteen years of age then and was studying in the D. J. Sind College. He first heard Vaswaniji speak in English on the Sind University in 1946. He was greatly impressed by the beauty and fluency of Vaswaniji's language. Ever since, he kept going to the satsang in Krishta Kunj for nearly eight months just to listen to Vaswaniji, when the partition came. During this short period he grew attached to Vaswaniji and resolved to dedicate his life to him in due course.

After the partition, destiny took Atu to Banaras where he entered the Hindu University for the graduation course. He graduated after a year and a half and during this period of eighteen months the mystic attraction towards Vaswaniji began to grow from more to more. When his eldest brother, who had settled down in Delhi, tempted him to take up a job there, Atu declined, as he had decided to move to Poona and live in Vaswaniji's shadow.

Ever since Atu came to Poona he would willingly offer his spare time in the service of Vaswaniji. When Tanumal Mirchandani retired from the Welfare Department on 1 September 1957, Atu along with Laxmi Bhagwandas was placed in charge of this department.

Laxmi, wife of Bhagwandas Nandusing, assisted Atu in the work of the Welfare Department for sometime. Under Vaswaniji's guidance they rendered immense service during the floods of July 1961, when Poona was declared a flood-stricken area. Breach in the Khadakwasla Dam had resulted in the flooding of Poona, rendering countless citizens homeless. Thousands of displaced Sindhis, who had made Poona their abode once again were displaced, as their homes were submerged in the raging waters.

Pamo Manchandia, a cousin of Bhagwandas Nandusing, first saw Vaswaniji in Rohri in 1946 and felt drawn towards him. He had just passed the

Intermediate Science examination from the D. J. Sind College, Karachi, and had come home for vacation. During vacations Bhagwandas would employ him as a teacher in Sukkur and Rohri Mira Schools.

After the partition Pamo moved to Delhi, where he studied for three years in a Polytechnic and secured a diploma in Chemical Engineering. Destiny brought him to Poona in search of a job in November 1951. He secured the job of a supervisor in the Ammunition Factory.

Pamo attended the satsang regularly in Poona and gradually came in close contact with Vaswaniji and brother Jashan. By and by a longing to serve Vaswaniji began gripping his mind. He came more and more in touch with brother Jashan and started devoting his spare time to the work of the East and West Series. He would often go out with Dr. Prem Ramchandani to enrol subscribers for the journal. For this purpose the two of them would go to Bombay too. When the need of brothers to render personal service to Vaswaniji at nights was felt, Pamo was added to the group.

Santsingh Shahani knew Vaswaniji in Hyderabad-Sind. It was on account of his father, Hukumatsing, that Vaswaniji had in 1934 returned to Hyderabad from Larkana to be by his death-bed. His two sisters, Parpati and Kala, had become devoted to Vaswaniji since then. An active and a staunch Indian National Congress worker, Santsingh easily adapted himself to the new pattern of life in Poona.

Vasi Punjabi, Vashi's mother, was a student of Mira School in Hyderabad-Sind. Her parents were devoted to Vaswaniji and Vasi too attended the satsang in Poona, where she settled down after the partition. Vasi with her two sons stayed in the Raj Mahal Hotel, just opposite the Mira Campus. Her elder son, Vashi, a teenagar, soon attracted the attention of Vaswaniji. He gradually drew closer to him and became one of the group of the six who would render personal service to Vaswaniji at nights.

The group of six, consisting of brother Jashan, Atma, Pamo, Atu, Santsingh and Vashi, attended to Vaswaniji during the nights by turns.

Vaswaniji's younger brother, Mangharam, who had come to Poona nearly nine months back breathed his last on 19 June 1961. After spending nearly six months in Poona, he had gone back to Hathras, where he suffered from prostrate trouble. He was taken to Agra for operation. As soon as doctors permitted him to move, he returned to Poona for recuperation. He reached Poona on June 17.

Mangharam had grown considerably weak because of the operation. The very first night he arrived in Poona, Vaswaniji called him to his room and the two brothers were together for sometime. This was to be Mangharam's last quiet talk with his dada, whom he loved dearly and in whom he had immense faith.

On the following day, Vaswaniji was taken down as usual to the Mira Hall with his group. When he returned to his room, Mangharam was found lying unconscious on the floor. Dr. Grant was immediately sent for. He declared his condition to be serious. It was a case of haemorhage. He was therefore rushed to the Ruby Hall Nursing Home where he breathed his last the following day at 3 p.m.

Mangharam's mortal remains were brought to the Mira Hall in preparation for the final journey. Before the bier was taken to the cremation ground, Vaswaniji offered a prayer and spoke these few moving words :

"Dear sisters and brothers! My dear brother today treads the way of his ancestors! I, too, will soon have to walk this way. Today, I fain would ask of you to take with yourselves this thought, this lesson, this teaching of Guru Nanak Dev:

Wayfarers are we in this desolate world,
Where none may for ever abide.

"The world is desolate, but for one thing. In this *samsara*, in this world, there be a flower. And blessed is he who taketh with himself this flower to the Lands

Beyond. It is the flower of the Nama, the Name Divine! May you and I take this flower with ourselves, for one day you and I will pass on. None hath remained in this world for ever and none may abide here for ever. And when we depart, may we take with ourselves this flower of Nama. May we be filled with this longing. Then will our coming to this world seem blessed.

"Cherishing within my heart this one longing, I bow before the dear departed one and seek his blessings. And even as you leave this hall may these words ring like a bell in your ears

Wayfarers are we in this desolate world,
Where none doth for ever abide.

"This is even the teaching of the sacred scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. This is even the teaching of the saints. The world is transient and one day we shall depart from it; we shall make our exit from it. I, who am now seated before you and speak these words, I, too, shall pass on and you will bear my body for cremation. May you do so treasuring within your heart this one prayer, this one aspiration, this one thought. For I, too, shall walk the way of my ancestors, as each one of us has to do. The world is transient and none may abide in it for ever. May this prayer rise from the heart of each one of you:

Wayfarers are we in this desolate world,
Where none may for ever abide.

"May your blessings, dear brothers and sisters, be upon the dear departed one and may the blessings of the departed one be upon us all.

"Be not sad. Let not your hearts be filled with sorrow. Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the Gita: 'Grieve not, O Arjuna!'

"Grieve ye not. Be not sad. But bow at the Lotus-feet of the Lord. Be resigned to His will. And fulfil the purpose of your life in serving Him and in serving the poor and the needy."

Brother Jashan was born on 2 August 1918. On his 40th birthday, Vaswaniji had expressed a desire that brother Jashan's birthday be celebrated in

a fitting manner. Ever since, August 2 was celebrated by brother Jashan's numerous admirers. This year, on his 42nd birthday, Vaswaniji wrote a message for him. It was more than a mesage; it was a song that rose from the inmost depths of his heart. Vaswaniji addressed brother Jashan as a "child of my tears and prayers." He wrote:

"Child of my tears and prayers; Child of destiny!

"This day I give thanks to Him, the Builder of Destiny, that I have seen your face again and touched your feet and been blessed once more.

"I know I soon must quit this scene and rise from flame to flame and seek the stars.

"India, alas! is broken and the world is sad and lonely. A prayer rises in my heart, today, that you may still trust the Rishis,—the Seers of the Secret of Life,—that you may have always a heart of sympathy and love, that you may always seek your joy in communion with the common life and in the songs of children and that, in the tumult and noise of modern life, you may still bear witness to the City of Saints and Sages.

"Rich is your spiritual inheritance from your revered father. Compassion is the crowning aspiration of your life. Is not compassion the Ganga which flows on, gently pouring in the heart the water of healing the sad world needs? Is not compassion the key to that freedom which we find in the hearts of the noblest and the purest among mankind?

"Far from my home am I today. Blessed be the Name of the Lord that, in my exile here, I have been blessed by you and taught by you the great lessons of Compassion and Sympathy. To Him I bow down with a prayerful heart. May He grant you strength and illumination to fulfil your mission in life!"

Was Vaswaniji hinting that his mantle was to fall upon the shoulders of "this child of destiny"? Brother Jashan had already endeared himself to the

devotees, many of whom would collect around him at night for talks and discussions. This soon gave place to fellowship meetings which were conducted by brother Jashan at that late hour.

On 11 December 1960 the foundation stone of the Gita Bhavan was laid by Hotchand Advani for which Sulachhini Satramdas had, in 1952, donated Rs. 50,000 in sacred memory of her dear husband.

At a special fellowship meeting held for the purpose, Vaswaniji lit the havan fire after which Hotchand Gopaldas laid the dedication stone. This stone has an inscription of the following *sloka* from the Gita:—

Whatever thou doest,
Whatever thou eatest,
Whatever thou givest as gifts away,
Whatever tapasya thou dost practise,
O Arujuna, son of Kunti,
Do it all
As an offering unto Me !

Gita: IX, 27

Another foundation stone was laid by Col. T.D. Chablani on 5 March 1961,—the foundation stone of the Mangharam K. Khemlani Dispensary, for which Saraswati Mangharam had donated a sum of Rs.30,000. Another brother had donated Rs.10,000 for a Pathological Laboratory, which was to be added to the dispensary. The unit was to be named after Mulchand Udhavdas. At this ceremony, Vaswaniji expressed a hope that the Mira Campus, housing various departments, might one day become a community centre. He, who beheld God's mercy in every act and at every place, said that the new building for the dispensary was a witness to God's great mercy.

Parpati Malkani, who was one of the first disciples of Vaswaniji and had all along participated in almost all the activities conducted under his guidance, became diabetic as she advanced in age. She developed cardiac trouble also. Doctors advised her to take

rest and avoid exertion. She was also advised not to climb staircases. But the importunities of medical men were not for her. She was made of an entirely different mould. She would climb up to Vaswaniji's room at least once everyday to seek his blessings even though he would meet her earlier in the Mira Hall downstairs.

Parpati Malkani grew weaker day by day and was advised to have a thorough medical check up. Before she could go in for a check up, she passed away. On 14 September 1961, the last day of her sojourn on earth, she wrote a letter to Vaswaniji seeking his advice whether or not she should go for a check-up. About the time Vaswaniji was reading her letter, Parpati Malkani breathed her last, thus rendering medical tests and check-ups entirely infructuous. Parpati had always aspired to pass away in Vaswaniji's life-time. "Life will become unbearable for me in Beloved Dadaji's absence," she would often remark. Blessed was Parpati!

The month of November is usually a month of intense activity and excitement for Vaswaniji's disciples as the days dearest to the satsang,—the birthdays of Guru Nanak and Vaswaniji,—fall in this month. This year it became doubly so on account of the visit of the Acting President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who was invited to perform the opening ceremony of the new building of St. Mira's High School on November 17. On this day three illustrious sons of India,—Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Acharya Karve and Vaswaniji,—met on the Mira Campus.

The meeting point of three roads as well as three rivers has a great significance for people of Hindu faith and is regarded as sacred. But the meeting of three great souls holds a still greater significance. Accordingly the function, held on the Mira Campus on November 17 in a spacious *mandap*, artistically decorated with flowers, festoons and foliage and adorned with mottoes and mantras in different languages, was remarkably significant.

Dr. Radhakrishnan had graced St. Mira's High School at Hyderabad-Sind sixteen years ago, in October 1945. Greeting the honoured guest once again after such a long lapse, Vaswaniji said:

"Dr. Radhakrishnan! What a joy to greet him on this occasion! Fourteen years and more have passed since I came to Poona. I travelled to this place from my birth-place,—Sind. The village-folk in Sind believe less in meetings, more in *mellas*. Our meetings in Sind are *mellas*. What is a *mella*? *A mella* is a meeting of fellowship. In the villages of Sind we do not believe in conventional academic functions but we believe, we meet together to greet one another in fellowship and love. And it seems to me that this meeting together of men and women to hear the beloved of our hearts,—Dr. Radhakrishnan,—is more of a *mella* than a meeting.

"It is a privilege to have Dr. Radhakrishnan in our midst to bless us and the Mira Movement. Thinking of this *mella*, I have said to myself: 'Here in this *mella*, God meets Himself in brother man. We meet together in the spirit of fellowship and love. My links with him are more than with any other great men who live today in India.

"Friends of the Mira Movement! I have asked myself, again and again: 'Who is he ' Many of you think of him as a great man. My friends! I think of him as a great servant of humanity. I think of him as an awakener of East and West. When, many years ago, he published his remarkable book on Indian philosophy, I remember *the Times Literary Supplement* in an article, paid a remarkable tribute to Dr. Radhakrishnan. The writer of the article was, I believe, Dr. Inge,— a great thinker. He wrote to say that Dr. Radhakrishnan had, by publishing the book, opened a new path to thinkers of East and West. I recalled the words of a great thinker of ancient Egypt. Walking along the banks of the Nile, this thinker said: 'I am come to give a new awakening to the people.' He was a seer who dwelt on the banks

of the river Nile. I bow down to Dr. Radhakrishnan as a great awakener of East and West. East is East, they say, and West is West. Yes, East and West both are astir in the hands of Eternal Peace. And he is a lover of peace : he is a lover of humanity.

The East is God's and the West
The Lands of the North and the
Southern lands :
They are all at rest
In the peace of His Hands!

"A sufi thinker of Iran, in a book, speaks of 'seven valleys' which one must cross to attain to the wisdom of the Perfect Life. Of these 'seven valleys', the last valley is 'the valley of knowledge'. 'When you enter the valley of knowledge,' he points out, 'you hear a song; and the song says: 'Blessed are you to come here to join the company of the servants of God.' This, verily, is true knowledge,—the service of humanity : this is true knowledge,—the service of the eternal values of life. Of this great truth, my beloved friend, Dr. Radhakrishnan, has spoken to us, again and again, in book after book, in article after article, in lecture after lecture. This truly great man of India,—perhaps the greatest man living today,—has emphasised this thought, this great truth, that true knowledge is the service of eternal values, the service of God, the service of humanity, the service of the poor and the lowly.

"Friends and countrymen! Several years have passed since Germany crumbled to her fall. At the close of the first World War, Germany lay fallen. Germany, once the leader of Europe, was a defeated, a depressed nation. A new government came into being. The portfolio of economics was given to a man whom I regard as truly great,—Ratheneau. He was in charge of the economics portfolio, and Ratheneau wrote a book, *The Way of Economics*. I would ask every young man in India and every professor and every teacher to read this book carefully,—*The Way of Economics*. This great man, Ratheneau, speaks

in this book, specially to the young men of Germany. He says to them: 'O ye that are young! You want to be great again and so you wish to have more money, you wish to have possessions, you wish to become the leaders, one day, of a new, prosperous Germany. But you are wandering!' Says this great thinker: 'One thing let me tell you, young men of Germany! If you will truly build a great German nation, cultivate the soul!'

"When asked: 'Sir! What do you mean by cultivating the soul?' he says: 'Cultivate character!' And he offers an analysis of the elements of character. Four special qualities he emphasises in order that you may build a new character. I wished I had time to speak of them. Enough, if in some hearts that listen to me here linger these words of the great German Professor of Economics, the German Minister of Economics: 'Cultivate the Soul!'"

Dr. Radhakrishnan then rose to speak. His speech was a masterly exposition of Indian traditions and I am tempted to quote from his speech at some length.

Dr. Radhakrishnan said:

"Sadhu Vaswaniji, Sri Karve and friends!

"I am very happy to be here this morning and participate in this auspicious function of opening the new building. It is a kind of a pilgrimage for me to come to this place and see two great souls of our country.

"Education, it is said, consists mainly in the vision of greatness. We have great ideals portrayed in our scriptures, in our epics, but here we see the incarnation of those great ideals on the platform with us. So one great function of education is thus fulfilled. As I sat here I looked at that notice-board put down there which says: 'True education is not a withered parchment but the living water of the spirit.' Tradition, by which this country lives, is not a memory of words. It is an abiding inspirition. It is an illumination of the soul. That is what our tradition has been perpetually recreating itself as new challenges

occur. It is a living tradition. As it is said here,—the living water of the spirit.

"What are the ideals which constitute our great tradition? I can put it in three words : *abhaya*, *ahimsa*, *asanga*. *Abhaya* or fearlessness; *ahimsa*, love of all; *asanga*, non-attachment. *Abhaya* is a thing for which human beings try. Hegel, a great German philosopher, trying to characterise different countries with which he was familiar, said: " Persia stands for light; Greece for grace; Rome for empire; India for dream." India dreams,—for a higher life, for a fuller life, for a richer life, a nobler life.

"Perfection has been the ideal of all people in this country. They are not satisfied with things as they are. 'Lead me from the unreal to the Real. Lead me from death to Immortality. Lead me from darkness into Light.' Life is perpetual growth, a perpetual evolution. Don't you want to get rid of the existing state? Don't adopt things which make you feel all is well in this world. The human being is dreaming, is aspiring, is trying to transcend his present condition and reach some condition which will give him freedom from fear. Let us attain fearlessness. What is it we find here? Sickness, old age, death. Time is the great devourer. Everything is annihilated. Great empires and great civilisations come and go, but is there anything which can give us a sense of security, anything which makes the human individual feel that even though this passing show may be subject to the mutations of time, there is immutable reality, there is something which supersedes mere succession? And while we live in this world of succession, we must have our hold on the timeless or the eternal.

"*Abhaya* is one of the things on which all our prophets laid the stress. Not merely our prophets, other prophets also. 'Be not afraid' said Jesus. ' मा शुच ' Krishna says to Arjuna. So to get rid of fear is the ultimate thing.

"*Ahimsa* follows naturally. If you feel that the

whole world is enlivened by the Supreme Reality, that there is not one individual in this world who has not got his roots in reality, whether he is conscious of it or not, if you are able to realise that, you will feel it is not your right to impose any kind of suffering on any body. We just had the scene of Ashoka's conversion.

"In the *Dhammapada* it is said: 'Victory breeds hatred; the conquered live in sorrow'. There is no point in your trying to inflict pain on other people. You merely ill-treat them. You ill-treat the divine in them.

"*Ahimsa* is not merely a thing which concerns peace and war. It deals with our everyday life. *Ahimsa* in that sense of the term is non-violence in your daily life, in your daily behaviour.

"The work which Maharshi Karve has been doing all his life was to lift the weight from the backs of people who have been suppressed,—the submerged people of this country. We have subjected ourselves to sorrow and shame, because we have subjected millions of our countrymen to humiliation. It is essential, if we are true advocates of *ahimsa*, to understand that in our daily life we have to be considerate, kind and compassionate to other people. Judgment is not for us. Understanding is the only thing left to us,—sympathetic understanding, some kind of fellow-feeling. The recognition of the divine in every human being is there. That is what we are called upon to accept.

"*Abhaya* is the first; *ahimsa* is the second; and the third is *asanga*, non-attachment. We are here as tenants. No individual is immortal. No nation is immortal. All things are subject to the law of time and if we are to work in this world, we have to work in a spirit of utter detachment. We have to understand things, not because we hope to succeed but because those things are right. So it is we are called upon to participate in that work of the world. Work here and do our utmost, not caring for the cost or the consequences. Let us understand that we are here as temporary tenants in this world, guests here,—called

upon to do something for this world and for this life. We are a dreaming race. Make life better, make it nobler and make it richer; doesn't matter if in the process we have to lay down our life. Whatever be the cost, whatever be the sacrifice we are called upon to make, the right thing is *asanga*,—non-attachment. The great people in this country worked in this spirit of *asanga*.

"The other day I was speaking to the President of Germany. He said: 'We are prosperous, but we are unhappy. We are prosperous. We have all the things we want. We can assist you: but deep down in our hearts there is some emptiness, some vacancy, some sorrow and that gives us unhappiness.' That is what the President of the German Republic mentioned to me when I was there. You find it in the Upanishads: न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्य Man is not to be satisfied by wealth. You may have all the refrigerators in the world, all the cars in the world, the highest position you can occupy. You can have power, you can have everything in the world, but unless the spiritual dimension in you is satisfied, unless you are able to develop it, it will not be possible for you to find peace in this world. You will be a restless soul. You will be hankering after more and more. You will never have the spirit of contentment which is essential for attainment, if a human being is to find rest.

"*Abhaya*, *ahimsa*, *asanga*,—these are the great ideals which have come down to us. Let us stick to them.

"I have pleasure in opening this building and hope that boys and girls who go out of this building will be filled with the love of God and the love of neighbour."

Dr. Radhakrishnan was then invited to tea where Vaswaniji and several other eminent citizens were present. Dr. Radhakrishnan and Vaswaniji had a heart-to-heart talk.

Soon after his return to Delhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan addressed a letter to Vaswaniji in the course of which he wrote:

I enjoyed my visit to your school. I am delighted that I had an opportunity of seeing you again after many years.

I have no doubt that your institution will make good progress and will maintain the spirit of harmony and devotion which I found there.

Vaswaniji in his reply wrote to Dr. Radhakrishnan thus:

You little know how oft I have thought of you since you left Poona. Your presence and your words gave me joy. I sometimes think of you as a star,—a great star which looks down with the love of immortal Rishis!

I looked into your eyes as you blessed me : I saw a new world pressing in your heart, and the very secret of your soul spoke to me from the Full Blessedness, the Heart of your heart that said:

"Citizens are we all of that Spiritual City which the Rishis named the Atman,—the Atman from which floweth the Joy of Life and the Peace which holds in its holy hands both East and West and will not let them part asunder : for the twain are needed to make the world one in Love Eternal!"

Bless me, beloved brother, bless me, every day! I long for the day,—will it come soon?,—when you may come again and stay in our midst for a day or two and your presence in our midst may become, indeed, a *mella,*—a meeting wherein a Rishi of yore may meet his brethren to bless and heal human hearts!

Soon after this function, Vaswaniji's health once again deteriorated and he became so weak that he could not even address the several hundreds of devotees and admirers collected on his birthday a week later. The day was therefore celebrated in a solemn manner. There was the fellowship meal as usual in which nearly four thousand people participated. The people were sumptuously fed, while brother birds and animals were also served. A purse of Rs.1,10,000 was presented to Vaswaniji at the

evening fellowship meeting which he passed on as usual to the Brotherhood Association for multifarious humanitarian and social activities.

Telegrams in hundreds poured in from different parts of India. Dr. Radhakrishnan, in his telegram, wished Vaswaniji "many more years of health and happiness." Lady Promila Thakersay, Vice-Chancellor of S. N. D. T. Women's University, Bombay, wrote in her letter:

Sri Vaswaniji has been a great source of spiritual inspiration to many of us. He reminds us of the cult of Rishis. Poona is really fortunate that Sadhuji has selected it for his activities.

Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh sent the following telegram:—

Adoration to God-intoxicated, mystic, philosopher, Vaswaniji, dynamic embodiment of highest humanitarian ideals over several decades, who through illustratious personal example, illuminating poetry and prolific writings, inspires millions to ardent love of God and selfless service of man. Unique are his contributions to educational thought and practice. In him are reflected the most radiant aspects of the genesis of Indian culture and spirituality. May Almighty keep this gifted admirable saint amidst us for many decades more.

Kindle the Light

The educational activities bearing the banner of St. Mira in Poona, working under the inspiration and guidance of Vaswaniji, soon became a cynosure in the eyes of the educationists in India as well as abroad. The *Maharashtra Educational Journal*, the leading educational journal published in the State of Maharashtra, wrote about the Mira Institutions in 1961 as under:

"Sadhu T. L. Vaswaniji and his band of devoted workers deserve congratulations and praise for the educational work done by them in Poona during the past eleven years. They started their work almost with nothing and have raised institutions worth about 11 lakhs in 11 years. The Mira Movement, besides catering to education, does work in the social, cultural and humanitarian fields on non-sectarian lines. St. Mira's is a unique institution in Poona and we wish it greater success in its noble work."[1]

The Mira Schools catered to the needs of the student community of Poona upto the High School level in the best traditions of Indian education and culture. Vaswaniji whose emphasis was always on education of girls felt that a college for girls should be started. St. Mira's College for Girls was thus

started in 1962, and was affiliated to the University of Poona.

It would have been in the fitness of things if a lady could have been appointed as Principal of the College. As the Executive Committee could not secure the services of a suitable lady, adequately qualified and in tune with the spirit of the Mira Ideal, Prof. K N. Vaswani, M. A., L.L.B., Chief Editor, "Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi," was invited to become the first Principal of St. Mira's College, which he willingly did. Years ago, while he was a college student in Hyderabad-Sind, K. N. Vaswani had received inspiration from Vaswaniji. Later, he had also been greatly influenced by Gandhian thought and Vinoba Bhave's philosophy. Brother Jashan, M.SC., was requested to become the Rector of the college.

It was in the third week of June that K. N. Vaswani came to Poona to take charge of the college. He met Vaswaniji everyday in connection with the working of the college. It was during one of these visits that he requested the revered founder to give a motto for the college "Kindle the Light" were the golden words that flowed from Vaswaniji's pen. The Principal's face beamed with the light of joy as he read these words. He could visualise that the light that Vaswaniji referred to was the light of love and compassion, of purity and prayer, of service and sacrifice, and of sympathy with the lowly and the lost.

Lead, Kindly Light
Amid the encircling gloom

were the lines Cardinal Newman had written years ago, lines which have been a source of inspiration to many around the world in this agitated age. Vaswaniji, a man of vision, would fain dispel the darkness around us. Through this motto: Kindle the Light, he focussed the attention of the college authorities on his vision to train the college girls to be the right type of future mothers, as also the right type of future makers and the right type of the future saviours of humanity.

Education, according to Vaswaniji, was a thing of the spirit. India had lived through the dark centuries of her subjugation by the light of the ideals of her seers and sages, her rishis and saints. India, after independence, could progress more rapidly, according to Vaswaniji, only by kindling the light of these ideals, by keeping it burning and by passing on this light from generation to generation.

If the Mira School which Vaswaniji had founded three decades ago in his native place, Hyderabad-Sind, was a child of his tears, the Mira College may well be regarded as a child of his *tapasya*.

It was indeed on a bed of *tapasya* that Vaswaniji lay. From his bed of *tapasya* did he pour blessings upon this new venture, St. Mira's College for Girls. On 20 June 1962 Vaswaniji was carried from his bed of *tapasya* to the Mira Hall to greet the new-born college and to kindle the havan fire. The hall was packed to capacity and even its verandahs overflowed with people. Maharishi Karve, 105 years old, was also present to shower his benedictions. It was as if a grandfather was blessing his grandchild.

Men and women of light and learning sent messages of good-will, wishing the new college a bright future. After prayers were offered, Vaswaniji spoke a few words.

In his brief but thought-provoking speech, Vaswaniji laid stress on "knowing through doing". He held high the honour of womanhood, when he said:

"India and the world need the help and inspiration of the woman-soul. It is all the more necessary to educate girls in the right atmosphere. The woman-soul shall lead us on.

"The pattern of education for India's women should blend knowledge, character, social service and awakening of heroic qualities. St. Mira's College for Girls is an humble attempt in this direction."

Principal K. N. Vaswani, and the Rector, brother Jashan, also spoke on the occasion. The

Principal said that the Mira College aspired to be a centre of culture and light, while the Rector said that the college aimed at rebuilding our broken homes.

K. N. Vaswani worked as Principal of St. Mira's College for seven weeks only as he had to return to Delhi. Vaswaniji asked brother Jashan to become the Principal of the College. Brother Jashan agreed, but on the condition that he would not draw any salary.

St. Mira's College for Girls aroused interest in the minds of many a Poonaite. Years ago, an attempt had been made by Maharashtra Girls' Education Society to start a college exclusively for girls which was soon closed down. St. Mira's College for Girls was therefore a second attempt in the direction o women's education and was watched with keen interest.

The people of Poona at first became sceptic when the opening of St. Mira's College was announced. Many of them expected this college, started with the Pre-Degree Class of the Bachelor of Arts, to fold up in a few years' time. But Vaswaniji and his devotees were certain that this "child of Vaswaniji's tapasya", which was yet in its infancy, would in time grow into a full-fledged degree college. And a full-fledged college it did become four years later. In time to come, Bachelor of Commerce course would be added besides the Bachelor of Arts course.

Like St. Mira's Schools, this college has certain unique features. The first and foremost feature is the Sanctuary. Who ever heard of college students gathering together in a hall to offer prayers before beginning the work of the day? Who ever heard of college students removing their shoes and sitting on the floor to sing *bhajans* and songs? But that is what every pupil in the Mira College has to do.

Before attending to their academic work, students and professors of the Mira College gather everyday in the Mira Hall to commune with God, to offer prayers and to gain inspiration. The Mira Hall

has become for them a power-house, which supplies strength of body, mind and will; strength to turn ideals into deeds.

The college has made rapid progress during the ten years that it has worked under the able guidance of brother Jashan. The Mira College has a hostel which was started with a donation of Rs. 100,000 from Naraindas Mahboobani, a Sindhi philanthropist and a merchant of Japan. The hostel bears the name of Mathuribai Karamchand Mahboobani, the revered mother of the donor.

The Mira College has shown remarkable academic results during these years,—results for which any college may well feel proud. However, the special feature of the college is that students are prepared for the Higher Examination of Life. They are inspired to kindle the Light of the Atman, the Light of the Spirit. They are urged to keep the light burning and also to pass it on to others.

Vaswaniji's concept of new education is summed up in these words:

A new education, aiming at awakening of the heart, is our urgent need. When the heart is awakened, it will influence the head in the right direction. A new light will radiate from the heart to the head. A new vision will illuminate knowledge. And India will be a herald of a new World-Renaissance,—a Renaissance of the Spirit.

St. Mira's English Medium School which had started in 1958 with first standard was growing with every passing year and a separate building to house this school was planned.

On 22 February 1963, Mahashivaratri day, Prof. D. V. Potdar, Vice-Chancellor, Poona University, laid the foundation stone of St Mira's English Medium School. On that occasssion, Vaswaniji made the following moving speech:—

"Let the opening words of my little talk to you this morn be the ancient Vedic words, the word of the ancient Rishi:

Asato maa sad gamaya !
Tamaso maa Jyotirgamaya !
Mrtyormaa amrtam gamaya !

"The Rishi was a Seer of the Secret, a Seer of the Truth of life. Of him it is written:—'Wanting Heaven, he gave away, gave away all his property!' For to him came the realisation that he must renounce the world to have his joy in the Eternal.

"Such a man, we are told, kindles the 'Triple fire' of (1) knowledge (2) meditation, and (3) practice; his triple duty being: (1) study (2) concentration, and (3) renunciation.

"He understood that every thing came from the Spirit, the Spirit alone was sought by him and he attained everlasting peace that was beyond birth and death.

"The Sat is the Self, the *Atman*. The *jyoti* (light) is the Self, the *Atman*. The *amritam*,—the Immortal,—is the *Atman*, the Self.

"From the *Atman*, the Self, falls life as shadow falls from man, writes the Upanishad.

"And the Self, the *Atman*, we read, 'lives in the heart'.

"All things fly to the *Atman*, the Self, as birds fly to the tree for rest.

"The Self, the *Atman*, is not known through talk, discussion, learning, however great. He comes to the man He loves! He takes that man's body as His own!

"He is found by the Pure, the daring man.

"He who has found Him seeks no more. For him the riddle is solved. Desire gone, he is at peace. Peace, Peace, Peace everywhere,—was the aspiration of the man who rejoiced in the *Atman*,—the Self.

"Let my closing words be the words of the Seer of the Maharashtra, the great Poet and Sage, who is the beloved of his people,—of the peasants who till the soil and sing his songs, the boatmen who toil and sail and sing midst darkness and storm, and the

Varkaris, true pilgrims, who light every year, at Pandharpur, their simple lamps and weave their garlands to crown Vithoba, the Beloved.

"Tukaram is the well-loved Rishi of his people, the saint who was a lover of the poor, the poet who ravished with his *abhangas* and lyric poems the hearts of the weary and heavy-laden, the lonely and homeless wanderers on the path of life. And as I close I know of no nobler words than of Tuka, the God-inspired, God-intoxicated poet of the Maharashtra, who sang:

Whithersoever I go,
I see Thee, Vithoba!
I see Thee by my side!

Thou still dost take me by the hand:
Thou still dost guide me
Wherever I go!

And as I do walk along,
I still do lean on Thee,
And Thou dost bear my burden, Lord!

In every man I see a friend, indeed!
Within me and outside, I feel
Thy holy Presence, Lord!
Around me and above me art Thou!

Prof. Potdar was visibly moved by Vaswaniji's brief but inspiring address. During the course of his talk he paid the following tribute to Vaswaniji:—

"Dadaji's services to Maharashtra, to India are very great. They are most wonderful. His is a Universal mission. He has revived the old traditions of the Seers and Sages. His is a great vision. What we need today is this great vision,—that we all belong to one Family, one Brotherhood, one Fraternity, one Fellowship."

A Messenger of the Spirit

Vaswaniji was a born saint. He was born with a mission in life; he was born to serve. Once he expressed the purpose of his life in the following words:—

In the anguish of the heart, I cried: "Let me go to the mountain heights, for there is peace : but here is strife and suffering."

The Master said: "Never forget, my child! that you are born to serve! So stay here and work in the broken village and in the mammon-dominated city!"

And I said: "Master! the peace of the mountain is not here: all around is noise and din!"

And I saw the Master weeping, and he said: "My child! here is suffering and my sons and daughters wander in darkness. Go forth, my child! And serve them and lead them out of darkness into Light!"

While still a boy in his early teens, his mother, Varandevi, had once asked him: "What would you like to be, my child, when you grow up?" And he had replied: "A fakir, mother. A servant of God."

Varandevi had been as if thunder-struck. Before her eyes rose a vision in which she saw her son, going about from one place to another in the garb

of a mendicant, with a begging bowl in his hand. How could any mother bear to see her child dressed in ochre clothes, going about in this manner? Vaswaniji was a brilliant student and Varandevi had harboured high hopes in him for she always felt that he would reach the top in any vocation he chose for himself. Hearing the words: "A fakir, mother! A servant of God!" her head as if reeled and in a voice charged with emotion she cried out: "No! No! my son! You shall not become a mendicant. Promise me that you will never wear the robe of a fakir."

Vaswaniji became astounded, nay shocked, at his mother's attitude. But being an obedient son, he consoled his mother with the words: "Alright, Mother! I shall do as you have commanded."

And Varandevi further said: "And promise me, my child, that as long as I live, you will live in the world and earn money,—if only for my sake." "So be it," Vaswaniji had spoken by way of assurance.

Varandevi had breathed her last in the year 1918 when Vaswaniji was thirty nine years of age. At this time of his life, as the Principal of the Mahendra College, Patiala, he was very well placed and had before him a rosy and radiant future. But the "saint" in him would not allow him to continue with his "career" The very night his mother passed away he sent in his resignation by telegram, as he felt that he had fulfilled the promise to his mother, and that wordly tasks should bind him no longer to the world. It was high time, he felt, that he should devote himself, body and soul, to the Eternal.

In search of the Eternal, Vaswaniji had then spent some years of his life. The quest over, he had made Hyderabad the centre of his activities There he had started a number of activities for the spiritual, cultural and social uplift of the people. The Sakhi Satsang, the Mira Movement in Education, the Welfare Department, the Charitable Dispensary, the journals, —Santmala, Mira and Shyam,—became vehicles of service and brought many aspiring souls in India and

abroad in closer touch with Vaswaniji. The Nam Nagar in Hyderabad and the Krishta Kunj in Karachi, where Vaswaniji himself lived and where all his activities were centred, became places of pilgrimage to several aspirers. A number of them expressed their great appreciation for him and his work and paid him glowing tributes.

Dr. Weisel, an eminent Austrian thinker, after meeting Vaswaniji, said that he regarded Vaswaniji as one of the six great men of the world. During the course of his tribute he wrote: Among all the ministers, statesmen, philosophers, I have seen, met or made friendship with, I found only six to whom I could give the attribute of "great men" without any reserve. Two of them are now dead. Among the remaining four, one is Sadhu Vaswaniji.

* * *

Paul Richard, an eminent French writer and savant, wrote thus about Vaswaniji: I have been blessed for amidst the deserts of Sind, I have found a true prophet, a messenger of new spirit, a saint, a sage and a seer, a rishi of New India, a leader to the great future, Sadhu Vaswani.

* *

His Excellency Nicholas Roerich, world famous Russian artist, had the utmost reverence for Vaswaniji. He once expressed his appreciation in the following brief but beautiful message:—

As an untiring ploughman, Sri T. L. Vaswani labours in the vast field of Literature and Religion. He kindles the hearts and leads the youth to the lofty summits of Truth.

* * *

H. S. L. Polak, co-worker of Mahatma Gandhi in the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa, during his visit to Sind, came to Hyderabad especially to meet Vaswaniji and saw the working of St. Mira's High School. He was so greatly impressed that he wrote in the Visitors' Book: The Mira School is doing a most valuable work under Sri T. L. Vaswani's

inspiration, in training Young India to express itself, at the highest level, in the promotion of human brotherhood, communal harmony, and inter-religious understanding.

* * *

Prof. W. Lutoslawski, Polish thinker and author, considered Vaswaniji to be the right kind of leader. During the course of a message of good-will he wrote: India divided cannot fulfil its mission among the nations. But India united will become a power in the life of mankind.

Such a School as St. Mira's is the most efficient instrument for the creation of a national Indian spirit.

I trust Vaswaniji is the right kind of leader, being an humble and prayerful teacher. May he live and develop the Mira School into Pan-India University! He has enthusiastic reverence for his spirtiual ancestors and this is an essential condition for producing spiritual offspring. If Mira was a queen-saint, may he become one of those philosophers who achieve national power. His hero-worship, his sermons on great men are likely to awaken in his disciples noble ambitions of service.

* * *

Miss Martha L. Root, Baha'i teacher, on her visit to India met Vaswaniji. She also visited St. Mira's School. She expressed her admiration for Vaswaniji and his work in the following words:—

To meet a soul like Vaswaniji is worth making a journey across the seas.

I have not found a more spiritual school in India than St. Mira's High School which I have just visited. Blessed are the girls who have the great opportunity to study here! This is a "University of the Spirit". May the glory of God be upon your founder, Sadhu T. L. Vaswaniji, forever and forever. He is not only the apostle of new cosmic education, not only the "Ralph Waldo Emerson" of your country, not only an author, a poet, but he is a preacher whose words are touched with the "Flame of the Love of God", a preacher whom you can hear twice every

day in the sanctuary, with whom you can have sweet fellowship. He "lives the life" before your very eyes and he "leads you into the Kingdom of Heaven".

* * *

After the partition of India, Vaswaniji made Poona the centre of his activities. Since coming to Poona, the life and work of Vaswaniji attracted the attention of a much larger audience. Tributes and messages of good-will continued to be showered upon him in abundance. Like far-flying winged messengers, the Mira and the East and West Series, carried Vaswaniji's words to lands distant and near, and many around the world were influenced by his message. Many were the letters of high appreciation received often and on by brothers Jashan and Gangaram.

In a letter to Vaswaniji, Gurdial Malik, once a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore, wrote: You are a rare flower on the tree of life. Not only an individual flower on one of its many branches, nor a part of a bouquet.

You are complete and compact in your true Self.

For, the little self in you was swept away long ago.

You are, therefore, a flower fragrant with fellowship with God on the one hand, with Nature on the other, and with Man in the middle.

You are, indeed, a ray of Man, the evolver in the Eternal.

My salutations to you, O Watcher of the Eternal, on the watch-tower of life.

* * *

Lady W. Thackersay, Vice-Chancellor of S. N.D. T. Women's University, Bombay, wrote: To-day when the world is torn asunder by the evil forces of greed, power and hatred, we want people like Sadhuji (Vaswaniji) to soothe our hearts with the message of love and kindness.

* * *

Woodland Kahler, Marquis de Innocent, President, International Vegetarian Union, England, wrote: Simply by remembering dear Dadaji (Vaswaniji)

we at once reach a higher level of the inner spirit where true solutions to life's problems really exist. Dadaji's (Vaswaniji's) life was illuminated by a remarkable continuity of loving service to man, bird and beast; and his image still shines as a living source of spiritual Light in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

* * *

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Indian Republic, wrote: The life of Vaswaniji has been a saga of unassuming service, spiritual illumination and a source of inspiration to us all.

* * *

Prof. Aurello E. Peterlin of Academic Universalis, Italy, wrote: In this world full of hatred, our purpose is to illuminate the minds and the hearts of mankind to love and to help reciprocally. The great mystic, humanitarian and educationist, Sri T. L. Vaswani has written wonderful words which I say over and over again and I pray all people to meditate on them: "The world is on flames. And what power can quench them, if not the Power of Love?"

* * *

On the 87th birthday of Vaswaniji, C. Rajagopalachari, India's elder statesman, wrote: I knew Sri T. L. Vaswani in the early years of my collaboration with Gandhiji. He now enters the 87th year of his earth pilgrimage. I, too, do the same. But how far I am from Vaswaniji's dedication! He is happy with the company of Gopala and all the blessed saints. I am struggling with men of the world and erring administrators and arrogant men to whose charge our affairs are consigned.

* * *

Mathew Mokay of England wrote: In the teachings of Sri Vaswani one is linked up with the rhythm of Eternal Truth. Deep calls unto deep and a response arises in the soul. Would that all people of the world could read his message. Truly, the need is great!

* * *

Alvin H. Goeser, American thinker and author, wrote: Vaswani must be one of the great spiritual individuals in the world today. A living model has greater power to influence and direct the lives of people than do a thousand principles or doctrines preached by words of mouth or written in books. I would feel deeply honoured to be permitted to be in his presence for only an instant.

Starr West Jones, Senior Editor, Guide Posts International, New York, wrote: Today we find that man's technology is constantly shrinking the dimensions of the world in which we live, and we should fear to look towards a shrinking end were we not encouraged to observe, in the other direction, a tremendous expansion of man's spirit generated by the example of such enlightened men as the venerable teacher, Sri T. L. Vaswani.

Henry Thomas Hamblin, Editor, "Science of Thought Review," (Chichester, England), wrote: Sri T. L. Vaswani, in our humble opinion is a saint of the first water. Poems and articles flow from his pen like gushing streams down a mountain side. Although his writings embrace many subjects, they are all in praise of the Lord and Divine Love.

Sri Vaswani deplores the tendency of the age to adopt the vices and follies of the West, and calls his countrymen and women, and also the young people back to the teachings of their rishis and saints. And very beautifully he does so, for his mind is filled with lovely thoughts, and he possesses a wonderful gift of expression, so that his writings are a joy to read.

The Life Beautiful

"Build your lives on the twin rock of *smaran* and *seva*," Vaswaniji often said to those who fain would listen to him. Also : "Go into silence for sometime everyday."

Human souls are born in this world of *maya*, this plane of *karma*, that they may realise the Self. Realising the Self, they rise above dualities and pass into peace that passeth all human understanding. They reach the state of *nirvana*, where they become free from the bondage of birth and death.

Ordinarily we feel that the Self is something apart from us. We associate ourselves with our body and mind. We consider ourselves to be a separate entity. In reality our body and mind are transient. Alone the Self *is*. When we realise the Self, we become one with It and the body and the mind then become instruments of the Self. The body and the mind thereafter become instruments of higher life. They express eternity in time.

Realising our Self, we discover that the same Self dwells in others too; It dwells in all beings.

What is *smaran*? What is *seva*? What is silence? How do these help one in Self-Realisation?

Smaran is remembrance of one's *Ishtadeva*, a

manifestation of God dear to one's heart; He with whom one aspires to be linked.

Seva is service of the neglected, the needy and the distressed; but service becomes seva when it is performed in the spirit of sacrifice, without any motive of worldly reward. Did not Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, say that the reward of service could only be greater service?

Much of what passes off as service today is vocation, as all who serve want to be paid one way or the other for the services they render. They offer their time and get their recompense.

True service, *seva*, harbours no such motive. The aspiration of a true *sevaka*—one doing seva—is to labour in the vineyard of the Lord and place his labour as a love-offering before God.

Vaswaniji urged over and over again that while one should keep one's hands engaged in work, in one's heart there should be constant remembrance of God. For thereby work becomes an act of worship to the Divine.

And what is silence? Silence is going within. It is silencing the storms of passions and desires and undertaking a journey towards the Centre that lies within.

Each one of us has a Centre within us, wherein is seated the Soul, the Self, which is a spark, a ray, of the Divine. The Self is not revealed as It is covered by gross matter, by veils in the form of gross vibrations, so that we cannot perceive It, we cannot get in touch with It. *Smaran*, the remembrance of our Ishtadeva, helps in softening the gross vibrations, so that these become purer and finer, enabling us to delve deep within us on our journey towards the Self.

Seva helps us in realising the truth that we all are one, that through us all flows the same life-stream, the same life-current, and that there is no separation between one entity and another. By doing seva, our whole outlook on human relationships undergoes a change. In serving others, I become a part of others and others become a part of me. For all of us are a part of the Greater Life we call God.

Smaran and *seva* are the two angles of the mystical triangle. The third angle is silence.

By building one's life on *smaran*, one's inner vibrations become finer and purer. *Seva* helps to realise that we all spring from the same source of life. And in moments of silence, with these realisations one is able to pass the vibrations enveloping the Self, and penetrating deeper and deeper at some stage, one gets a glimpse of the Self. One gets just a glimpse in the first instance, but the joy of that momentary glimpse is so intense that one gives up everything to lead a life of prayer and remembrance, to get in constant touch with the Self. One thereby passes from the darkeness of *maya* into the Light of the *atman*.

And then? What then? One perceives. One realises. One becomes a Seer of the Secret. But one sees what no words may tell.

When Narendra once asked Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa whether he had seen God, the Paramahansa replied: "Yes, I see God as I see you. But I see Him more intensively." He could not say anything else besides. For words are a poor medium to express the truths of higher life. Words have been coined by mortals to express the experiences and things of the material world, the mortal world. They are too feeble a medium to portray the truths and the experiences of the spiritual planes of existence.

The very life of the Self-realised one however becomes altered, becomes new. The experiences and the knowledge of that suprastate entirely transform that person His life becomes one integrated whole, where the ideal of unity of life is expressed. To him all become his brothers. To him none remains an alien. He sees the One Life pulsating in all. So he loves everyone. In the sinner, too, he sees the Sinless One. He rises above the *dwandas*,—the dualities of life,— the idea of I and you, for I and you he now sees as the same.

To him all life becomes sacred. And he cultivates reverence for all life,—human as well as sub-human,—nay, he looks even at inanimate objects with reverence.

In him the very instinct of violence, which is like unto a flame, gets extinguished by the ocean of love that arises in his being.

Such a one walks softly, talks softly. His very touch becomes soft too. For he realises that all around him, above him and below him there is nothing but God. He feels a strange power in him and sees himself as a master of all that surrounds him. But simultaneously comes to him a realisation that this power, this shakti, is not to be used in overlording others, but has to be spent in their service. A Master, he becomes a servant of all.

The life of such a one verily becomes beautiful, reflecting all that is noble and pure and holy for he has reached the zenith of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Such a one becomes like the man in a story who wore black. When some one asked him: "Why do you wear black? Have any of your relatives or friends passed away?" he replied: "Yes, five friends! They all died on the same day."

"May I know who those five friends were who passed away together?" he was asked. And he replied: "These five friends were with me ever since I was born. And now they are all gone! They were lust, anger, avarice, attachment and egoism."

Verily, the five basic causes of evil in man,—lust, anger, avarice, attachment, egoism,—die away in the life of him who has reached the stage of the Life Beautiful.

Smaran and *seva* and silence became the hallmarks of Vaswaniji's life and he became the very personification of the Life Beautiful.

Once a significant question was put to Vaswaniji. "What is the secret of true life, the Life Beautiful?"

To this question Vaswaniji replied in a single word: "Krishna".*

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* By Krishna Vaswaniji means one's Ishtadeva, a manifestation of God with which one wishes to link oneself on the spiritual path. He may be Krishna or Christ, Buddha or Rama, Guru Nanak or Mahavira, etc

After a brief pause Vaswaniji expounded thus: "Let Krishna be your leader on the path of life! Accept no conventions. Live everyday making Him your Leader. Krishna and His teaching,—the Gita,—Krishna and His life, Krishna and His communion with the poor and simple, Krishna and His affectionate call to the sinner in the strife of life, are, to my mind, summed up in the words,—the Life Beautiful."

Vaswaniji further said:

"To the simple and lowly in the heart comes the call to live the life which is life indeed,—the Life Beautiful. Of this life a significant symbol is Krishna's Flute. Krishna was essentially a Singer. His song flowed through the Flute to receptive hearts. And His song speaks through the *Bhagavad Gita* and in the lives of the devout and pure, whose lives are dedicated to the service of the Master.

"We seek with selfish hearts to build houses of power: and they become prison-houses. They enchain the soul. We purchase power, position and the yellow dust we call gold. We purchase it all at a heavy price. We purchase the world and pay for it by surrendering freedom and we find, at last, that to be 'big' is to be in 'bondage!' "

Vaswaniji continued: "In a beautiful text in the Gita, Krishna calls attention to two things we must do, if we are to respond to Reality and live the life of the free man. The two things are:—(1) *Tapasya;* and (2) *Yagna.* In ease and enjoyment, alas! we have spent so much of our time. We have lived a life of *bhoga* (sense-enjoyment)."

Vaswaniji, too, had lived a life of *tapasya* and *yagna* which had made his life beautiful. He was in constant communion with the Eternal. He had broken the barrier between the mortal and heavenly world and had developed mystical contact with the sages, seers and prophets of different faiths who had appeared on this earth at different times. He belonged to the brotherhood of heretics and none was alien to him. His heart was a storehouse of reverence,—reverence for

all saints and prophets, irrespective of caste or nationality.

In the "East & West Series" Vaswaniji used to write on the life and thought of a saint or a sage of east or west. His writings expressed the intensity of his understanding of their thought as revealed to him. It seemed as if he and the saint, concerning whom he wrote, were in close communion with each other.

In the eyes of Vaswaniji one could see the reflection of divinity as often they would glow with an unearthly, mystical light such as never was seen on land or sea. It would then appear as if he was in touch with the Kingdom of Heaven. His face would then wear an expression of ineffable joy.

In Vaswaniji's room hung a beautiful picture of Guru Nanak Dev. And there were moments when, looking at the picture, he would say to the few seated before him: "How many times has not the Great Guru come out of this picture and blessed me!" And his eyes would sparkle with a wondrous light.

At other times Vaswaniji would be full of thoughts of Sri Krishna, the Eternal Flute-Player, and an ethereal smile would play upon his lips. The words he would then utter would capture the hearts of those seated before him and cast a spell upon them. "Krishna comes and blesses me in my dreams over and over again," he would say.

Vaswaniji would also often speak of Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, Sri Chaitanya, St. Kabir, St. Mira, Rabia, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and a host of other saints and prophets as if he knew them all personally from times immemorial. Looking at him and listening to him, one was reminded of a galaxy of saints, so illuminated was his interior life, so vibrant and forceful were his words.

Vaswaniji was the very picture of humility. To those who came and bowed before him and sought his blessings, he would himself bow down and ask them to bless him. Many a youngster, who bowed before him with folded hands for his blessings, would

have a strange experience. Vaswaniji would part the youngster's hands and place them on his own head and ask the youngster to bless him.

Once as Vaswaniji sought the blessings of a little one, he said: "I bowed to the little child and asked him, in the name of the Lord, to bless me. And I saw Child Krishna looking at me and playing on His flute. I saw, too, the Christ-child glowing in the little one and gazing at me with pure, tender eyes!"

Vaswaniji would often say that a fruit-laden tree bent low : and if someone were to strike it with a stone, the tree would give of its fruit in return. Not stone for a stone, but its very fruit to the one who has thrown a stone towards it. And he would often pray: "God! Give me the strength, each day, to sing Thy Name, to serve the poor, and to worship the defeated in the race of life!"

Vaswaniji had all along aspired to be a servant of all. During the last few years of his life when he had detached himself from his normal worldly activities, he began devoting more time to the service of others. People in distress would run to him for comfort and solace, succour and guidance. Many from different parts of India would write to him, seeking counsel and comfort. If a local landlord harassed a tenant, the latter would rush to Vaswaniji, who had myriads of arms in disciples and devotees and would speed at his bidding and help the oppressed. Many an ailing would come to Vaswaniji for in him they found one who could give them the love and sympathy of his heart, which often worked greater wonders than allopathic and homoeopathic medicines.

If a person was out of job and badly needed one, the best person to approach in this connection was Vaswaniji. Where all other human sources had failed he would surely stretch forth his hand of help.

Hermits usually live as recluses. Not so Vaswaniji, who, though confined to bed, mixed and mingled with men and imparted solace and comfort and helped and healed them.

In the course of a letter to his youngest nephew, Dr. Harkrishin, Vaswaniji once wrote: "I am a hermit. And I live in a house by the side of a road. And I see men move on, some good, some bad, as I am good and bad. But here, by the roadside I stay with a longing in my heart that I may become a servant of all, a helper of man."

To Vaswaniji would come the poor and the needy, day in and day out, and he would listen to their tales of woe, and give them food and clothing and above all the sympathy of his heart. To many he would give away much more than they asked for and often with a twinkle in his eyes he would say to the few seated around him: "I do not wonder at their demands. I only wonder why they ask for so little." Some around him would be wonder-struck at his spirit of magnanimity.

Vaswaniji once said: "If I meet a hungry man, let me not ask why he is hungry, when so many others feast at their banquet tables. Let me give him food to eat.

"If I meet a naked man, let me not ask why he shivers in the cold of wintry nights, when so many have their wardrobes filled to overflowing. Let me give him garments to wear.

"And if I meet a man lost in sin, let me not ask why he is lost, but with a look of compassion, with a song or a syllable of love, let me draw the sinner to the Spirit.

"Let me draw by awakening the longing that lies latent in all.

"Let me lead some out of darkness into light!"

Vaswaniji often offered this prayer:

"O Lord! have mercy on them whom men have made criminals by denying them work and bread and then, in their hunger and humiliation, have chained them in jails!

"O Lord! dry the tears of them whom humanity hath not heeded and hath made harlots or too weak to resist the tempter and the tyrant!"

In the poor and the distressed, Vaswaniji saw a faint reflection of Krishna and Christ. Were they not Friends of the friendless ones?

Sri Krishna was called by numerous names. But the name dearest to his heart was *Daridra Narayana*, a servant of the poor. And as for Jesus Christ, did he not say: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me food : I was thirsty and ye gave me drink : I was stranger, and ye took me in : naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick and ye visited me : I was in prison and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Vaswaniji had boundless love for all. Many who met him for the first time expressed that the love they received from Vaswaniji in the few minutes of their meeting surpassed the love they had so far received from others. Vaswaniji's love excelled the love their near and dear ones showered upon them, for it overflowed from a pure heart. His love was not restricted to human beings but it extended to the bird and the beast also. "For me, not to love the bird and beast would be not to love the Lord," he said. "For His children are all birds and all beasts no less than human beings."

A man came from afar, across the seas, and met Vaswaniji for some minutes Neither Vaswaniji nor the man spoke a word to each other. Before leaving, the man however remarked: "The experience I have just had may not be described in words. I have felt I have been bathing in an ocean of love."

Vaswaniji at times played with children. Once one of them was asked: "Do you know who he is with whom you are playing?" And the child in his innocent manner spoke words in which is enshrined the secret of Vaswaniji's life. "I know not who he is. I only know this that he loves me!"

Vaswaniji would give the love of his heart even to those who did not behave properly with him. Once in a while would come to him one whom the

world appeared to have disowned and discarded. Such persons often talked harshly with others out of frustration. One day one such person came and spoke harshly to Vaswaniji also. Vaswaniji, however, talked to him in a sweet manner. But the man continued to talk in a very rough tone. After this man left, someone asked Vaswaniji: "Dadaji! Why do you give love to people who are so rude and harsh to you?" And he replied: "Each one gives out of his storehouse what he has. I have nothing but love in my heart."

Vaswaniji had tremendous faith in God. He would never worry about the finances. "God's treasury is ever-full and when He needs anything to be done, He provides the wherewithal," he would always say.

And sure enough as and when the need arose, Vaswaniji received the finances to meet the obligations.

Once St. Mira's College, which was affiliated to the Poona University, had to deposit Rs. 25,000 towards the Reserve Fund as per University rules. The last date was fast approaching. There was no sign of this amount. On the penultimate day some around Vaswaniji became a little worried. But Vaswaniji was not perturbed. He showed no sign of concern.

The last day arrived. The money had to be deposited in the bank that day. And early in the morning an unknown man in simple attire came to the Dhamibai Basantsing Building and expressed his desire to meet Vaswaniji. To all appearances, he looked to be one of those who come to receive rather than to give. This man, clad in coarse attire, was brought to Vaswaniji's room. He sat in Vaswaniji's presence for sometime. When he got up, he bowed to Vaswaniji, asked for his blessings and placed a bag at his feet. He then left.

Soon after the man left the bag was opened, and lo and behold! it was found to contain the exact amount of Rs. 25,000. The amount was passed on to the Mira Education Board towards the College Reserve Fund. Thus the obligation to the University was fulfilled.

In his thought as in his life, Vaswaniji reflected all that was noble and pure. Many would come to him with a request to write short messages for them and these reflected on the purity of his mind and the nobility of his thought. A few of these messages are reproduced below as they would benefit the aspirants striving to make their life beautiful.

May Krishna,—the guardian of your life,—
be ever near to you in thought and love!
May He be your strength and solace as are
His angels above!

* * *

The whole world is a vesture, a cloth of beauty with which Krishna hath clothed Himself. The trees, the stars, the moon, the hills and rocks, the green grass which covers the earth are God's vestures of beauty.
Bow down to the Lord of Beauty and regard the whole earth as holy, holy, holy,—the holy habitation of Krishna, the Master of beauty and grace. And as you walk the earth, feel that you walk with the Lord and be purified!

* * *

There is a city beyond Bombay and Bangalore
A city of the pure and fair!
It sings the one Name Divine!
Sing ye the Name!
And rise above thoughts of money and fame!

*

My Master!
I walk in darkness:
Yet I know Thou art the comrade of my soul!
Hold me firm and lead me in the night :
Lead Thou me on
To where, beyond the night,
Is the Light, fair beyond compare,
The Light of Thy face!
The Light that knows no night!

* * *

Learn to trust Life as the earth trusts the heavens above: Each day the earth revolves safe in the faith that the Heavens will not fall, safe in the faith that He, who is her Master, blesseth all, the great and the small!

* * *

What is life?

Not pursuit of earthly honours, not enjoyment, not position, not power, but a *yagna*—an 'offering' unto Thee, O Lord of Life and Love!

So bless, Lord! that this humble life, its every breath, may be an offering of service to Thy children,—a dedication to the Will Divine!

And Thy children are not only human beings, but also birds, beasts and streams that flow and trees that grow, the flowers and fruits, and the stars that shine and the poor and needy ones, Thy suffering children, who live each day in want and pain! May my life be daily spent in their service, my Master!

* * *

Once the chains of bondage were on me!
And I struggled to be free:
How I yearned for freedom!
Then I became a child—a little one:
And I renounced the honour and attractions of the great:
Then I grew wings and began to soar in space:
I became free!
The secret of this freedom
Is fellowship with the little ones and the broken ones
Of a broken, bruised Humanity.
My joy, today, is in the little things the child loves,
And the freedom of the free!

* * *

How may I name Thee,
O Nameless One?
I feel Thee in the Heart

And, gazing at the great stars
As they look down with immortal eyes
And mingle with the eternal secret
Of the silence which shines within,
I cry: "Thou art!"
Who can name Thy Name?
Are not names strife and smoke?
Purer and fairer than are names
Is the lotus face of which I behold
Reflections in the seers and singers
of Thy Light!
And in others, too,—music-makers,
Divine singers of the Ancient Song,—
Each one of them,
Shining with the Light and Love of Puran Dev,—
Puran Indra, Perfect Master!
Behold the Eyes! These say:—
"Fear not! For all around
He walks the way!"

*

I wandered far and wide: but one question
They asked: "What is life?"
I answered: "Life is a gift of love! So bless
thou all!
And keep clear of hate and strife!"

*

Live each day in the thought that you are a "drop" and will one day vanish in the "sea".
And thinking thus, give each day your heart's sympathy to the poor and suffering ones,—to the lowly and the broken ones!
In this world, suffering and pain have their sting on everyone, from one end to the other !
In the world of suffering and pain, be thou a light of sympathy to all. To the poor and weary, to the heavy-laden and broken ones, give a ray of sympathy and be for ever blessed!

* * * *

"Never fear!"
He saith,—the Lord of Life and Light!

The Lord of Love, ever bright
"I am not far
From thee! I am in stream and star!
And in thy heart I shine
And shine with Love Divine"

* * *

Destiny made Vaswaniji come in contact with many great men and perform great acts but he preferred to be in the company of a few, simple souls. He would speak to them of the simple life, of how to tread the little way, keeping away from the world's vanities and idle shows. Greatness, according to him, was a malady and a malady should always be shunned. In little acts of service, according to him, lay the salvation of man. "God asks of you not big things," he used to say. "Offer Him little acts of service with a loving heart and He will accept your gifts." Did not Sri Krishna say to Arjuna that He accepted *pushpam, patram, phalam toyam,*—a flower, a leaf, a fruit, a cup of water,—offered to Him in love?

"Do thy little work everyday and know that in little things cometh God to greet the soul. The more thou runnest after the 'big' or 'great' the more dost thou recede from Him. Be of the little, simple ones and affirm thy divinity," Vaswaniji once said.

Vaswaniji was once invited to address a big "Physical Cultural Conference" being held near Ahmednagar. When he declined, one of the organisers met brother Jashan and requested him to persuade Vaswaniji to accept the invitation. He told brother Jashan that the Health Minister had requested him to make a personal approach on his behalf. The Conference was to be attended by several thousands of people who would be very happy to hear Vaswaniji. When brother Jashan talked about this matter with Vaswaniji, he remarked: "Let the cobbler cobble his shoes." Brother Jashan would not at first take "no" for an answer. The audience of thousands of people who would collect at the meeting was something which should not be ignored, he felt. So he pressed his point

once more. But Vaswaniji replied: "Keep the throngs and the thousands to yourself! Give me the simple, humble tasks of life!"

A press correspondent once asked Vaswaniji: "What is your ambition?" And he answered: "I have no ambition. Every ambition is a chain which binds us to the earth. I but aspire to be a little one!"

Years ago when Vaswaniji had given up his "career" many had wondered why he had taken such a hasty step in giving up such a cushy, well-paid job to take to a life of renunciation. And Vaswaniji had said: "Not many will easily understand the joy of the life to which He, in His mercy, hath called me. Nature abhors vacuum : and the moment you empty yourself, the Spirit cometh to fill you. My life is not a life of negative asceticism or impoverishment, but of abundance and riches of joy and fullness!"

As Vaswaniji was advancing in age, he was growing weaker day by day and his feeble limbs were losing their power. He, who could hear words spoken in whispers, was by and by losing even his power of hearing. When this came to the knowledge of a doctor,—an ear, nose and throat specialist,— he visited Vaswaniji and sought permission to examine his ears and give him a course of treatment. But Vaswaniji declined to undergo any treatment. He told the ENT specialist that he was glad he was gradually losing the power of hearing and remarked: "There is the greater law of compensation. What the ear loses in its power of hearing, the heart gains in its attention to the still, small voice within. And as the ears become deaf to outer sounds, I hear more and more of the music and melody of the Inner Realm."

Rightly had Vaswaniji once said:

If thou wouldst hear the Voice, be deaf!
If thou wouldst see the Light, be blind!
If thou wouldst live, desire not life but death!
If thou wouldst grow, crush thy self!
If thou wouldst possess the All, renounce all!
If thou wouldst enter Peace, pray for pain!

Adieu ! Adieu !

23 July 1964. It was the eve of the blessed Guru-Purnima Day.

The Guru-Purnima Day has a significance of its own in the Hindu calendar as on this day disciples and devotees gather together at the abode of their gurudeva and offer worship to him.

In connection with this day many devotees had collected in Poona to offer Vaswaniji the reverent homage of their hearts. There was an atmosphere of gaiety and rejoicing in the Mira Nagar.

It was 10-30 p.m. when the news came that Dr. Harkrishin, Vaswaniji's youngest nephew, had met with an accident at Chinchwad, a suburb of Poona, and was being brought to the Sassoon Hospital for treatment. Brothers Jashan and Gangaram and a few of us rushed to the hospital and found that the dearly loved one was no more. His body was brought to the Mira Nagar that very night.

Dr. Harkrishin, who had qualified himself as a Ph. D. in Structural Engineering from the University of Gotteburg, Sweden, was the youngest senior engineer in Larsen and Toubro. He was held in high esteem by the management of the company. He was in charge of the construction work of the SKF-ABC Factory

at Chinchwad. In his veins flowed compassion for the workers and he would often be seen on the worksite working with the labourers as one of them. His spirit of humility and compassion touched the hearts of many of the workers and drew a responsive chord from them. They in turn loved him as they had loved no other boss till then.

Hundreds of workers and labourers, including women, gathered in the Mira Nagar to pay the last homage of their hearts to Dr. Harkrishin, who had been their friend and helper, who had always treated them with love and kindness, and had sought to keep them happy. Some of the high ranking officials of SKF–ABC and Larsen and Toubro came from Chinchwad and Bombay to bid farewell to him. Also present were countless other brothers and sisters of Poona.

Vaswaniji was present as the final preparations were being made to take the body to the cremation ground. Amidst the chanting of Ram Nam, flowers were heaped in abundance upon the body of the dear departed one.

It was a huge procession that followed the bier to the cremation ground. Royal was Dr. Harkrishin's funeral, worthy of a prince, of a Rajkumar. Vaswaniji led the procession for a short distance outside the Mira Nagar.

Vaswaniji, the eldest living member of the family, paid the following touching tribute to the youngest flower of his family :—

THE MESSAGE OF THE DARK NIGHT

That night, when I heard the news, I was half asleep.

Then I offered a brief mental prayer. And the thought in my mind was in the poet's words, which I often recited in the days of my youth:—

O Thou, Presence Supreme!
O Thou, Love Immortal!
Whom we who have not seen Thy Face,
By faith and faith alone embrace,
What reason cannot prove!

Then in my wanderings that night, in my dreamland, methinks, I saw thee. A light flowed from thy head and thine eyes. And the flood of light filled the open ground. The very particles of earth and sand seemed to shine as grains of gold. And in my dreamland I saw thy labourers whom thou didst love with the love of a brother and who loved thee as, perhaps, they had not loved any officer before.

Then I touched thy feet, saying: "Bless me!"

Then thou didst weep as a child. And thy face was illuminated. And, with tears touching my eyes, I looked around. And in the dark of that night I saw what I cannot tell all. But I heard, so I thought, a voice, shrill as the voice of a flute, saying:—"Be reconciled!"

This message I have enshrined in my heart: "Be reconciled!" For men may come and men may go, but Thou, O Lord! endurest for ever. And Thou art Love Immortal!

At His Feet rest thou, beloved Harishchandra, beloved of many hearts! Rest thou in the peace that is Life, in the peace that is Love! Rest thou and bless us all, giving us, every day, this message of the dark night: "Be reconciled! Be reconciled!"

I think of thee best, beloved Harsha! as a friend and servant of the poor and lowly.

For years I sought my Lord but found Him not. Then I worshipped brother man in suffering and pain. And finding him, I found God, my Lord. I found all the three,— my Lord, and myself, and my brother.

Exactly two months prior had passed away Jawaharlal Nehru, the beloved of Bharatavarsha. The news had come as a shock to millions of people all over India and abroad. Vaswaniji was asked for a message by the Poona Station of the All-India Radio, which was later broadcast.

Vaswaniji said:

Swift as electricity travels the news that Nehru, beloved of many hearts, is no more! And I recall the words of an Indian poet:—"Rama is gone and Gandhi,

too! Is this world a dreamland?"

But yesterday came the news that Nehru, returning From Dehra Dun,was feeling better in body and spirits. Today comes the news that the nation mourns the loss of its Leader and Liberator, and the markets are closed. Nehru is no more!

When Mahatma Gandhi passed away, "Hey Rama! Hey Rama" were the words on his dying lips. Gandhi was a believer. Nehru was a secularist. Yet he, too, believed in a religion of humanity. His heart was in tune with the poor and starving ones.

Of Johnson, the President of U.S.A., it is said, he never lets a day go by when he does not spend half an hour or so in the slums and, sitting sometimes on a log of wood, talks to the labourers and the artisans and enquires of their welfare. Of Nehru it may, I believe, be truthfully said that in his heart was love for the poor labourers and the poor peasants of India.

Sudden has been the passing away of beloved Nehru. Receiving the news of his departure, I recalled the holy words of the Bhagavad Gita:

Birthless and deathless
Remaineth the Atman, the Spirit,
Dead though the house of the Atman seems!
The Atman, the Spirit, is Life!
The flames cannot burn It!
The dry winds cannot wither It!
Immortal, ineffable is the Atman!

Nehru's body has crumbled to dust. But Nehru,—the real, the invisible, the essential Nehru,—is immortal. May he come into many hearts and kindle in them the one only light, the light of compassion and humanity, the light of sympathy and service! We, then, may truly say:— Nehru is gone, but his inspirer,—the Nation, Mother-India, ancient as the Sun yet ever new,—lives on!

A year later, as the July of 1965 was coming to a close came the heart-rending news from London that Dr. N. R. Motwani, who had so lovingly attended upon Vaswaniji for some years, had passed away.

He had gone to London for an operation of the kidney and had got himself admitted at St. George's Hospital. He passed away on the very first night, before he even could be operated upon.

Vaswaniji, who held Dr. Motwani in high esteem, paid a glowing tribute to this doctor-surgeon, who had served him on his sick-bed with the love of a mother and the solicitude of a father. This is what Vaswaniji wrote:

It is difficult to believe that I shall not see again his face which was a face of radiant light. He was a surgeon who lived in the presence of God.

I believe he gave to the poor, every month, large amounts, perhaps a thousand rupees, and always felt happy in the thought that he lived and worked hard, using his medical knowledge in the service of the poor and needy.

Dr. Coyajee and Dr. Motwani were the two shining lights of Poona. Both were servants of suffering humanity.

In far-off London, Dr. Motwani passed away, not without blessing, I believe, the poor and needy, who were ever near to his heart.

Thinking of him I have felt, again and again, that in him we of Sind have lost a jewel of the purest ray serene.

Sitting in my silent corner, as I thought of him, again and again, today, I recalled to myself the song which is dear to my heart,—the Song of Santideva, the Prince who renounced his palace to become a servant of the poor and suffering ones. He sang:

May I be for all beings
A healer of pain!
May I be to the poor
A treasure untold!
May I be a lamp that holds the light
To those who lose the way!

Of Dr. Motwani we all may learn the richest lesson of life that the end of knowledge is service and sacrifice. May the Beloved Doctor be blessed wherever

he be in this universe which still doth bless the poor and needy with hands of mercy with the love of the Mother-Heart. Many, who suffered from pangs of hunger and ailing bodies, beloved Motwani blessed, blending his hands with the hands of mercy and love. Dr. Motwani will, I believe, be long remembered with reverence and love which we offer to heroes and holy men.

A few days later, on 11 August 1965 to be precise, Vaswaniji's sister, Papur, migrated to her Homeland. Her foot slipped causing a split in her femur bone. She was taken to the Ruby Hall Nursing Home where she was operated upon. The operation was successful but she succumbed to death as her frail physical frame could not bear the after effects of the operation.

Sister Papur was Vaswaniji's last link with the family into which he was born. Forty seven years ago while his mother, Varandevi, was breathing her last, she had placed Papur's hand into his and had asked him to take care of her. Now that her earth-pilgrimage came to a close he must commend her spirit to the care of Lord Krishna; for Papur was a devotee of Sri Krishna and would read more than once everyday the whole of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita. Vaswaniji went to the cremation ground and personally performed the last rites even though his health was far from satisfactory.

The exertion of the visit to the cremation ground told upon his health and Vaswaniji got an attack of fever that very day. He was confined to bed for seven days.

Not a month passed by when the news of the passing away of someone near and dear to Vaswaniji did not reach his ears. In the mind of anyone else this would have created a void too great to be filled. But in the case of Vaswaniji, who was at this time of his life withdrawing himself from the outer activities and devoting more and more of his time to the interior life, the aura of holiness surrounding him began to grow richer in radiance.

No doubt, Vaswaniji was tormented by physical pain. No medical aid would bring him relief. Sleep would not visit him for more than two hours at a stretch. But all this physical agony would be forgotten when Vaswaniji listened to nam-kirtan and the *vani* of sufis and saints and he would often spend hours together everyday in this way.

There were times when Vaswaniji longed to enjoy sleep and acquire rest at night. Doctors would then give him morphia injections to dull his pain and to induce sleep.

Vaswaniji would get up early in the morning and after ablutions would call to his room the five brothers who were in attendance upon him during nights and take his morning cup of tea with them. He felt happy when he handed over to them one biscuit after another, to be taken with tea. During his last few days he repeatedly told them to continue taking their morning tea in remembrance of him even after he had left this mortal world. In compliance with Vaswaniji's wish they continue to spend the nights in the Mira Nagar and go home early in the morning after having partaken of their cup of tea.

The time for Vaswaniji's departure from the earth-plane was drawing nigh. His health was deteriorating day by day, but each day he was becoming more and more in tune with the higher life; he was getting nearer to the Divine Essence. He himself expressed once thus:

As the body is ageing, I feel I am becoming younger each day, coming nearer to my Lord. And to come nearer to the Divine Essence is to experience a beautiful dis-illusion about things and men. You view them not in interest or utility but in eternity. And viewed in eternity, you realise the littleness of your "ego" and your earth-environment.

As Vaswaniji drew nearer to the Lord, he gradually disassociated himself with the daily activities which he entrusted into the care of brother Jashan.

The last part of the life of saints can be more use ul to God and profitable to humanity than the

earlier years, as they have then a richer testimony to bear to God's goodness. Having grown in the spirit of detachment and renunciation, they sit as silent spectators still seeking to serve God and humanity.

Vaswaniji, too, would spend most of his time behind closed doors. He would be brought down at about 10 a.m. when he would sit in the sunshine in the Mira Compound for about two hours He would bring with himself bundles of one-rupee notes for distribution among the poor who would collect in the compound. At times he would send for fresh vegetables and grain and have these distributed. He would be brought down again at about 7 p.m. to join in the evening satsang. All those who wished to meet Vaswaniji and receive his blessings would gather on the Mira Campus morning and evening.

The year 1965 gave way to the year '66. And on January 11 came the shattering news that Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India, had breathed his last in far-off Tashkent, in Russia, where he had gone to have talks with the Prime Minister of Pakistan on terms for peace between the two countries.

On the following day, January 12, the news of Kaka Gadgil's passing away was announced. And Vaswaniji remarked: "Life is like a bubble floating on a stream. Today we are here : who knows where tomorrow's sun will find us?"

On January 15, as Vaswaniji was having his morning cup of tea with a few brothers, he expressed a desire that all his clothes be distributed among the poor. "I need only two pairs of clothes," he added. None took the hint that Vaswaniji was abouto to pass out of the mortal world into the immortal one and would not need any more garments of cloth for he was soon to be robed in raiments of light, in the vestures of the shining ones.

The Last Journey

"So bless me, Lord! that when there dawns on me the day of death, I may make to this beautiful world a friendly gesture of farewell and feel that to die is to embark upon a great pilgrimage. So bless me in Thy mercy that I may die in the beautiful pilgrim-spirit," so wrote Vaswaniji once.

It was indeed in the beautiful pilgrim-spirit that Vaswaniji made to this beautiful world a friendly gesture of farewell and set out upon the Great Pilgrimage. Silently did he heed and respond to the Call that came to him from the spaces blue. In readiness stood the boat at the shore to lead the Pilgrim across the River of the Love of the Beloved to the other side where stands the Blue Temple. Neither a sigh nor a groan escaped his lips and silently he embarked upon the Great Voyage.

This happened on 16 January 1966 at about 8.30 a.m.

As soon as the doctors declared that the spirit of Vaswaniji had cast off the physical body, brother Jashan offered the age-old prayer of the Indian rishis, which Vaswaniji had desired to be sung at that time:—

Asato maa sad gamaya !
Tamaso maa Jyotirgamaya !
Mrtyormaa, mrtam gamaya !

Rendered into English it means:
Through untruth lead us into Truth!
Through darkness lead us into Light!
Through death lead us into Immortality!

Brother Jashan then asked Atma Mulchand to sing the song "Adieu!" Vaswaniji had composed in Sindhi some years before. He had expressed a desire that this song too be sung at the time of his departure. The song is so touching that Atma, broken with grief as he was, broke down in the middle. In his broken voice he however managed to complete the song. The song, rendered into English, is as under:

Adieu! Adieu!

Ye children of my mother-land!
Your leave I take, your blessings I crave,
For at the threshold now I stand,
Ready to sail with wind and wave!
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

Oft have ye sailed in my fond dreams,
With your presence have ye oft blessed me:
Of the Great Beyond I now get gleams,
My burden of grief lighten ye!
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

In readiness doth stand my boat,
Life's game hath reached its destined end!
As on th' Expanse I set afloat,
I need good wishes of each friend.
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

With roses red and white jasmines
Have I e'er gazed and played life's part!
Come, fill your cup with love immense,
And offer me ere I depart.
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

Gifts of this life I take with me,
As I set sail for yonder Shore!
Somewhere, somewhen I shall meet ye,
The harp of life to tune once more.
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

'Tis not salvation that I seek,
But ashes, dust, I long to be!
At th' feet of hearts sorrowing, weak,
My Beloved's beauty do I see!
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

With their dust I leave for that Bourne
Where Krishna calls, where Krishna plays
Upon His flute, where doth adorn
The Cross from where Christ pours His grace!
The Call hath come from spaces blue,
Fare-ye-well, friends! Adieu! Adieu!

An earthen lamp was lit and placed near Vaswaniji's bed in accordance with the tradition. Sticks of incense and *agarbattis* were also burnt. The *Bhagavad Gita* and *Sri Sukhmani Sahib* were recited and *kirtan-songs* were sung.

On January 15, Vaswaniji had started his day in the usual normal way. At about 10.00 a.m., he had come down and sat in the Mira compound. As usual Vaswaniji conducted the satsang, after which *prasad* was distributed.

For the last five days Vaswaniji had been sitting in front of the newly built Gita Bhavan. For the last five days, everyday he distributed articles like saris, blankets, fresh vegetables, grain and cash amongst the poor who attended the satsang.

Looking back at that period, it appears Vaswaniji was sanctifying the spot where his mortal remains would be cremated in a few days.

Vaswaniji sat as usual in the sunshine for about two hours. He was then taken to his room.

At five in the afternoon Vaswaniji, however, felt a little uneasy and his breathing became slightly asthmatic. Doctors Hiranand and Narain Hathiramani advised that oxygen be given to Vaswaniji. Owing to fresh supply of oxygen, his lungs cleared up and he felt restful.

At about 6 00 .pm. when a few brothers and sisters collected in Vaswaniji's room, he was his usual self and even enquired about the news of the day. All through his life he had taken keen interest in national and international affairs and every evening he would keep himself abreast with the latest happenings.

At 6.45 p.m. Vaswaniji was brought down to the satsang. Satsang over, he returned to his room where several devotees had as usual collected for his blessings.

Soon Vaswaniji began to feel uneasy again. As he had had no sleep for the last three or four nights, Dr. Narain administered an injection, which usually made him feel restful even if it did not induce sleep. Soon Vaswaniji said to brother Jashan: "Jashan, my child, I would like you to be by me tonight." Everyone was blissfully unaware of the fact that Vaswaniji was a guest for that night,—and no longer.

Lights were put off. Only one dim light kept burning in Vaswaniji's room. A veil of darkness had been drawn upon the tired eyes of the world, and we, who felt weary, slumbered peacefully in the arms of the night, unaware of the sudden blow that awaited us. Little did we know then that death stood at the threshold to claim from Vaswaniji "the full vessel of his life". Little did we know then that, in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "the grim reaper lay in readiness" to take from Vaswaniji "the earnings and gleanings of life." Little did we know then that Vaswaniji would wake up from his sleep to start on his Celestial Journey, on his voyage over the Shoreless Sea.

For nearly two hours Vaswaniji slept, and not once did he ask that he be turned to the other side. He could not turn sides himself because of the fracture in the left leg, and every now and then he would ask

to be turned on the other side. Shantri felt this was something unusual and told brother Jashan about it. At about 2.00 a.m., brother Jashan went to Vaswaniji's bedside and gently asked if he would like to be turned. There was no reply. This made every one anxious.

Dr. Narain Hathiramani was immediately sent for. As he examined Vaswaniji, the colour of his countenance changed. He called Dr. Grant for consultation. Dr. Grant suspected cerebral haemorrhage and called Dr. Variawa, an eminent neuro-surgeon, for examination. Dr. Variawa confirmed the diagnosis and said that it was a matter of time for life to go out of Vaswaniji's body. The time was about 3.30 a.m.

How often had not Vaswaniji's condition grown serious in the past! But when doctors had given up all hopes, Vaswaniji by God's grace would revive and be restored back to health. On invariably every such occasion, fervent prayers would rise from hundreds of hearts and reach not only the throne but the ears of God, who in His mercy would respond. But when the end had to come, there was hardly any time left to offer prayers and to cry to Him.

Several disciples and devotees in and out of India felt something amiss that night. Some had dreams and some had premonitions, and they felt that Vaswaniji was no more to be with them. One such devotee of Vaswaniji reported that on that night he woke up unusually early. He looked at his watch, and found it was 4.30 a.m. Suddenly, he had a feeling that he would not be able to see Vaswaniji physically any more. With every passing moment, the feeling gripped his mind more intensely. A very strange feeling,—he thought at that time,—and he tried to go to sleep. He couldn't sleep, but got into a state of semi-sleep, when he saw, as in a dream, newspapers rolling off the press with a picture of Vaswaniji and the announcement of his passing away from this world. Soon, his telephone bell rang. He jumped for the receiver and felt that the call was from Poona. Yes,

the call *was* from Poona. He immediately enquired whether everything was alright. But Gangaram, who had phoned, informed him that Vaswaniji lay in coma in a seriousr condition, and requested him to inform other friends in Bombay of Vaswaniji's serious condion.

The news about Vaswaniji's departure spread through the city of Poona like lightning. Soon people began coming to Mira Nagar. They came by cars and on foot, by buses and on cycles, as fast as they could reach. None had the heart to utter even a syllable, not even to enquire how the end had come. They could but gaze at Vaswaniji in perfect silence. *Namdhuni* was sung all the time. Everyone was anxious to touch his holy feet, and to seek his blessings. Large tears stood in several eyes and it seemed as if clouds had collected in their hearts. Time seemed to stand still; the hours waited and watched even as with eyes filled with love and longing and dimmed with dew, the people gazed at their Beloved. The very wind had grown still, while the hearts heaved in grief. One by one, in the midst of *kirtan*, the people filed past, fell at Vaswaniji's feet, made obeisance, placed their love-offerings of coconuts and flowers, and then went and stood outside the room in order to make way for other aspirants, who waited patiently for their turn to come.

The sad news concerning Vaswaniji travelled to the local English newspaper, the "Poona Herald". The newspaper soon brought out a special bulletin for free distribution. The news also reached the Poona Station of the All-India Radio, and it was broadcast in their newscast at 9.30 a.m. and re-broadcast throughout the day. New Delhi Station of the All-India Radio picked up this news and broadcast it in their 1.3 p.m. newscast. The news thus reached the farthest corners of India and abroad in a very short time. Thousands of Vaswaniji's friends, admirers and devotees throughout India and the world, who heard the news were stunned. Many from many parts

of India immediately, on hearing the news, started on a "pilgrimage" to Poona. Many came by trains, some by cars and some by planes even from far-off distances as Calcutta,—a distance of about 2,000 miles. Each wanted to have the last *darshan* of Vaswaniji and be present at the last rites of him who had been their guide and a source of inspiration for all these years.

Messages and telegrams began pouring in from all over India in hundreds. The very first telegram came from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India, a friend of Vaswaniji for several years. He wrote: "I am deeply grieved to hear of the passing away of saintly Vaswaniji." Gulzarilal Nanda, Prime Minister of India, also sent a telegram saying: "Deeply grieved to learn sad demise of Dadaji. The death of this saintly leader would be widely mourned."

The news about Vaswaniji's leaving this mortal world was "flashed" by the Press Trust of India, India's leading news agency, and it hit the front page in numerous leading newspapers throughout the country on the following day. And the news was followed by lengthy eulogies in English as well as national language newspapers. So great was the impact of Vaswaniji on the thought and mind of the people of India,—the common man as well as the intelligentsia,—that editorial writers and commentators throughout the length and breadth of India wielded their pens and wrote lengthy columns on Vaswaniji's life and work and teachings.

Vaswaniji's mortal remains remained in his room for about two hours. His whole body was covered with garlands of flowers. Vaswaniji's mortal remains were then brought down to the Mira Hall on the mattress on which he had lain. His sacred body was placed on a raised platform on the same spot where, for years together, he had sat in his chair and blessed his devotees.

When Vaswaniji's sacred body was being lifted from his cot, hardly anyone could restrain from shedding

tears. Many who had suppressed their tears so far burst into sobs, for Vaswaniji was leaving his room never again to enter it and bless it with his physical presence. They reverentially placed their hands on Vaswaniji's cot and again placed them on their foreheads and eyes.

If Vaswaniji's room and the corridors had been filled to capacity, the Mira Hall too was overcrowded with people. For the news had spread from mouth to mouth, from one neighbour to the next, from one friend to another. The publication of the special bulletin of "Poona Herald" and the announcement on the Poona Station of the All-India Radio brought the news to many. And hundreds of people from every locality began trekking towards Dhamibai Basantsing Building,—which had been Vaswaniji's residence for the last sixteen years,—to pay their last homage to their Beloved. The opulent and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, disciples, devotees, friends, admirers and acquaintances,—it was a touching sight to behold the sea of these sorrowing faces, the seething compact mass of people of all castes and classes, of all creeds and communities collected to pay their homage to Vaswaniji, who beheld the One Light shining in all religions and races, in all countries and climes.

Every means of transport,—cars, buses, trains,—from Poona and outside, from Bombay, Kalyan, Nasik,—from North and South, from East and West, brought more people into Poona and each gazed with love, awe and reverence at Vaswaniji's serene and seraphic face. A beautiful, bewitching smile played upon Vaswaniji's fair face as if to welcome the visitors, as if to assure them all that he had not left them, that in spirit he was still with them and would continue to be with them.

Vaswaniji lay like a *rishi* crowned in unearthly glory. A halo of light surrounded his head. Had not God at his very birth placed upon his head a beauteous crown,—a crown of curly hair?

Invariably everyone, who entered the Hall, came and reverently placed a garland or a wreath on Vaswaniji's sacred body and touched his holy feet. To enable the people to have a clear view of Vaswaniji's face, garlands and wreaths were removed every now and then. People brought with themselves beautiful pieces of costly cloth too—velvet, silk, cotton and *khaddar*—and covered Vaswaniji's body with these. These pieces of cloth too had to be removed quite often.

Devotional chanting went on all the time. Along with clouds of incense, rose sweet but sad musical strains from the hundreds of hearts assembled in the hall. At a time such as this, when the human hearts feel helpless, what else is there left to do, but to cry to God and to lift the heart to Him? Songs composed by Vaswaniji, songs which Vaswaniji loved to hear and songs which suited the occasion were sung.

The cremation ceremony was fixed for the next day to enable devotees from distant places to have the final *darshan*. Special permission from the Municipal and District authorities was obtained to hold the cremation ceremony in the compound of the Mira Nagar, where a samadhi could be erected.

The Poona Station of the All-India Radio decided to broadcast a tribute to Vaswaniji. On more than one occasion, Vaswaniji had spoken from this station. And now they requested brother Jashan to speak on Vaswaniji. They brought the recording unit to Vaswaniji's room and the speech was tape-recorded. It was broadcast at 9.30 that night. All those present in the Mira Hall listened in silence to this soul-elevating, illuminating and inspiring speech. As we listened to brother Jashan's soft, sad but musical voice and his touching words, the eyes of most of us were filled afresh with tears.

The night gave way to the mystic hour of the dawn. The dawn drifted and sunshine burst upon the world and kept it aglow, but it failed to swecp away the darkness and anguish from our hearts. The drooping flowers of our broken hearts looked faded,

as we sat with bent heads. People started pouring into Dhamibai Basantsing Building once again. Soon the hall was filled to capacity and several had to stand outside, even though it was not yet 8 o'clock in the morning.

When the clock struck 9.30, amidst the chanting of *Ramnam* Vaswaniji's body was taken to the adjoining room and given a bath with warm water in which the sacred *gangajal* was sprinkled. A new pair of clothes was put on Vaswaniji.

Vaswaniji's face glowed with light not of this earth but of the heaven on high. He looked like a veritable god seated in glory in paradise. The usual white *khaddar* cap covered his head. But to me it seemed to be transformed into a crown of white roses. He was clad in a warm coat of blue colour which matched with the blue of his eyes, the azure of the vast expanse and sapphire of the sea. A new warm woollen Kashmere shawl was spread over him. Vaswaniji was then brought back to the Mira Hall, in preparation of the last journey.

People now could not restrain their tears, which flowed freely. The singers put forth their best efforts and chanted *namkirtan*. But even they broke down at intervals. People went on increasing in number.

Exactly at 11 o 'clock, January 17, Vaswaniji was taken out of the Mira Hall midst chanting as well as sobbing. Outside, in the compound, waited the truck specially decorated for the occasion with pictures and flowers. Pictures of Lord Krishna, Sri Isa (Jesus), Guru Nanak Dev and Gautama Buddha adorned the truck. Vaswaniji was carried and placed on the mattress of white cotton. There was clamour and confusion. Some pressed forward to touch Vaswaniji's sacred feet, others to take his blessings, yet others to catch a glimpse of his face. The balconies and porches of the Dhamibai Basantsing Building were crowded with the teachers and the taught, with adults and little ones, with sisters and brothers. A veritable sea of

faces was visible everywhere. Cries of *Dada Vaswani Ki Jai! Dada Vaswani Amar Rahe! Jo Bole So Nihal: Sat Sri Akal!* rent the air. The truck, which was piloted by Atur Sangtiani, a leading citizen of Poona, left the Mira Campus followed by thousands of pairs of weeping eyes and mourning hearts.

The route, along which the truck was to be taken, was lined on both sides with men, women and children. Two trucks, in which were seated bands of singers, procceded. Their chanting could be heard at a long distance. Thousands of people joined the procession including the Mayor of the City of Poona and other distinguished citizens.

The procession proceeded to the "Guru Sangat", then moved towards the Council Hall outside which, beneath the shade of a tree, Vaswaniji had so often sat in the seasons of spring and winter; it next moved in the direction of the Manney's Book Stall which Vaswaniji visited time and again, when he moved about freely.

The procession then passed through the Mahatma Gandhi Road. Every inch of space on the road was crowded. Every balcony, every window and every terrace of the shops and houses and every tree was packed with people. With hearts filled with faith and devotion, with faces eager and with hands folded, they stood patiently just to catch a last glimpse of the fond, fair face they had loved to gaze at. No wonder their eyes were heavy with unbidden tears. Tears flowed from their eyes as they showered flowers upon him. Several people were anxious to take Vaswaniji's film and photographs. So they stood with movies and still-cameras in their hands at vantage points, some even had climbed on tops of trees for the purpose. Immense was their love for Vaswaniji and immense was the faith they had in him. No wonder they stood in the blazing sunshine, regardless of the inconvenience they had to put up with. The procession had by this time swelled in number,—to over 40,000 by conservative estimates. Several people kept

clamouring for *prasad.* Offerings of coconuts and other things poured in such large numbers that even after distributing them all along the route, heaps still remained.

The enthusiasm of the people was inreed remarkable. Slogans of *Dada Vaswani ki Jai!* dent the air every now and then. The whole of Mahatma Gandhi Road was decorated with flags and festoons. At intervals arrangement had been made for showers of flowers to fall on Vaswaniji's body. At some places Vaswaniji's photos had been put along with those of Lord Krishna, Gautam Buddha and Guru Nanak Dev. It was a majestic sight,—a sight for the gods to envy.

Vaswaniji was given a reception and paid reverence worthy not of princes and kings, but of gods. Yes, was he not a god-like soul that had deigned to descend on this earth-plane in order to serve the cause of humanity and the voiceless ones? Was not a bride being led in procession to meet her groom at the wedding feast? Are not saints brides of God? Yes, Vaswaniji, too, was going to meet the Groom. The Beloved was going to meet her Spouse. And in the tradition of marriage-processions, coins were waved before Vaswaniji and flung into the crowds.

The procession returned to the Mira Campus at 2.30 p. m., after passing through several important roads. The Mira Nagar was simply overcrowded with people who had gathered to observe the final rites. Vaswaniji's sacred, tender body was placed on wooden logs. These rested on a cement platform which had been constructed overnight. The day before, it had been decided to cremate Vaswaniji's sacred body on the spot where Vaswaniji came and sat in the mornings for the last few days. Vaswaniji's body was covered with logs of fragrant sandalwood. Once again, the people came with their offerings, to sprinkle rose-water and seek his blessings. Vaswaniji's feet which had socks on them could not be concealed by logs of wood. So people came up to touch his holy feet.

There was a programme of speeches and songs specially composed for the occasion. The hearts of the onlookers melted when they listened to the touching words of these songs and the glowing tributes paid to Vaswaniji by some eminent citizens including B. D. Killedar, Mayor of Poona; H. G. Advani; A. David, Editor, "Poona Herald"; Popatlal Shah; Dr. Dinshaw Mehta; B. T. Shahani; C. K. Malkani; Gangaram Sajandas; brother Jashan and several others.

The crowds had simply swelled by this time. The traffic outside was jammed as even the roads were filled with people who were eager to pay their last homage to Vaswaniji.

It was at 5.30 p. m. when brother Jashan first set fire to the pyre. Fire spread gradually from log to log.

One by one, the devotees came up to do their final duty,—that of keeping the fire aglow by adding logs. Several of us kept standing, for we were loth to leave. When the logs caught fire huge flames leapt up in an effort to reach the skies. With tear-touched eyes did we all gaze at the flames and saw the sacred body of the beloved of our hearts perish in the flames and the elements of the body mingle with the elements of nature. He, in whose heart burnt the Aryan spirit, for he was a worshipper of the light, a worshipper of fire, before our very eyes became one with the flames. Methinks, I saw the flame of his Spirit soar to the Realm of Light. And as I watched the flames consuming the mortal remains of Vaswaniji, the lines Edwin Arnold uses in the *Light of Asia* kept ringing in my ears :

Om Mani Padme Hum,
The sunshine comes,

The dewdrop slips into the shining sea!

Then, methinks, I heard, in Vaswaniji's musical, ringing voice, the words:

Light travels on towards fuller light,
As fire embraces the flame,
The Bride goes forth her Groom to greet,
The soul to meet the Over-Soul.
Weep not, my child, for such is life;
A raindrop, a bubble, a wave;
On the Sea of Time we meet to part,
On some distant shore to meet again.

And from my broken heart burst forth these lines:

Into thy world, O lift me soon,
However heavy, Beloved, I be;
My heart for thee alone doth long
In life and death belongs to thee;
In thy vast love I still do trust,
And so stretch out my arms to thee;
O leave me not, but lead me thou
To thy new world of light and life!

I had been transported into a subtle sphere of thoughts when I was brought back to this mundane world and was asked to join in the *prakarma* which had already begun. Amidst the chanting of *mantras* and *slokas* from the Vedas, we went round the platform from which huge flames of fire arose. Now that there was nothing more to be seen and nothing more left to be done, with broken hearts, with heads bent low, with sorrow-stricken faces and with slow, faltering steps, people left the compound and wended their way home.

Later, there was a programme of *nam-kirtan* till midnight.

"Our dead are not dead till we forget them," says George Elliot. But these words apply only to ordinary beings. We in India have a strong conviction that saints do not die. They are immortal. They never cease to live. And Vaswaniji, too, is not gone. He lives and will continue to live in our hearts.

Vaswaniji Still Lives

To all appearances Vaswaniji was no more. But not so.

At the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian Nation, Vaswaniji had remarked: "There is no death to him who dedicates his life to the Life Divine. Death doth not touch Gandhi, for he gave his heart to God." On another occasion he had said: "Death doth not touch him who hath dedicated his life to the Eternal." And had not Vaswaniji dedicated his life to the Eternal?

Ever since Vaswaniji was a boy he had aspired to dedicate his life to the Eternal. But his mother would not allow him to do so. When in 1918 she breathed her last, Vaswaniji, true to his inborn aspirations, resigned from the Principalship of Mahendra College, Patiala Someone near to him felt that Vaswaniji had taken a hasty step in resigning such a respectable and well-paid job and asked him why he was renouncing. And he had replied: "I am renouncing to announce the Eternal."

Does not Sri Krishna say to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*

" He is never born, and he never dies : He is in Eternity. He is for evermore!

"Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth he for ever. He does not die when the body dies!"

And the spirit that was Vaswaniji is ever alive. Bursting forth from the shackles of the physical body, It shines in richer splendour and in greater glory.

On the Mira Campus at the spot at which Vaswaniji's mortal remains were cremated stands his sacred samadhi. It is a simple but beautiful structure in white marble. Everyday several sisters and brothers, coming to the sacred samadhi and sitting there in silence even for a few moments, feel the ever-living presence of Vaswaniji.

From the Unseen Realm Vaswaniji keeps guiding struggling souls to face the problems of life, cheering the weary and depressed, comforting the care-worn and sorrow-stricken, inspiring the discouraged and heart-broken with zest for life, leading the erring and astray to the right path, filling with love and devotion those that have turned their face away from the Lord and often healing the sick and ailing.

Vaswaniji at times visits people in their dreams to impart the much-needed consolation. To those that were not privileged enough to behold him in physical body, he blesses with his *darshan* in their dreams.

An American sister, Miss Karen Kordell, came under Vaswaniji's influence in a supernatural way. She had neither known Vaswaniji before nor had heard of him. But in 1967 all of a sudden she became aware of his living presence. In a letter to brother Jashan she has related her experience in touching words as under:

I can't express in words the joy your books have given me. Truly Dadaji was a pure and beautiful instrument through which these great teachings could be expressed. His words inspire me to live a life of love and service to humanity, and I pray for Dadaji's guidance.

I would like you to know the interesting story behind my relationship with Dadaji. There is a very dear and wise elderly lady named Gloria, living near my mother, at home in America. We have known her for more than ten years and she has been a blessing to us all,—a perfect example of a life dedicated to love and service to humanity.

Gloria had never known about Dadaji nor had I, until one day, last year, she told me that an Indian man has come to her in a vision. He said that his name was Vaswani but that we were to call him " Dadaji," which meant " elder brother". He said that he was born in Hyderabad-Sind and gave the year and that he left this earth-plane in Jan. 1966, in Poona. He said that he was helping me and that I would definitely be able to come to India to complete my training in dance and music He said for me to call on him always. This is how my association with Dadaji began,—never having seen him nor having read any of his writings nor even having heard his name until this time.

From that time onwards, I have "felt" him near, inspiring me, guiding me. And you have no idea how thrilling it was for me, after a few weeks had passed after my arrival, to suddenly come across an "East and West Series."

I pray Dadaji will continue to guide and direct me and help me to fulfil God's plan for my life.

Every Sunday and on other auspicious days tape-recorded speeches of Vaswaniji are played in the evening fellowship gatherings in the Mira Nagar. Listening to Vaswaniji's melodious voice devotees, with eyes closed and head bent, feel Vaswaniji's ever-living presence. They regard it as a boon and a blessing to be able to hear Vaswaniji's words which have the power to uncover the hunger in each human heart, the hunger for God. Vaswaniji's words also inspire them with the spirit of service.

During the last few years of Vaswaniji's earth-life, nearly 500 speeches at the fellowship gatherings

were taperecorded. These have been preserved for playing at the fellowship meetings and for circulation.

The garden Vaswaniji had planted continues to bloom and keeps drawing towards it admirers in abundance, inspiring them with the spirit of love and devotion. The beacon light, kindled by him continues to shine and radiate its light, guiding the destiny of countless lives in Poona.

The numerous activities started by Vaswaniji in Poona continue to flourish.

The Mira institutions, catering to the educational needs of about 3000 girls and boys of different communities, the three charitable dispensaries (two allopathic and one homoeopathic), the Bhandara, where the poor are fed everyday, the Welfare Department, the Kalyan Nari Shala and the BAWF Industrial Unit where 300 sisters are given opportunities to earn their livelihood by doing stitching and embroidery work, the journals,—East & West Series, Jago, Mira, Sant Mala and Shyam and other literature which carry `to different parts of the world Vaswaniji's message of the New Life,—all, all stand as monuments to him, who was born to give, who lived to love and who sought to serve.

Vaswaniji's work has stretched out beyond the bounds of Poona. Centres of satsang are functioning in Ahmedabad, Baroda, Bombay, Lucknow, New Delhi and Secunderabad. Fellowship meetings in these centres are conducted along the lines of the satsang held in Poona.

Vaswaniji's birthday continues to be celebrated year after year with renewed enthusiasm in all centres of the satsang in India and in Chicago (U. S. A.), Soerbhaya (Indonesia) and in Kingston (Jamaica) outside India.

In Poona, Vaswaniji's birthday celebrations cover a period of seven days. Organisers of different departments deem it their sacred duty to pay homage to their revered founder on this occasion and have a special program of service. Sisters and brothers come

to Poona from different parts of India and even outside, as on a pilgrimage, to join in the celebrations. Camps for them are held on the Mira Campus. In addition, Dada-Lila, where scenes from Vaswaniji's wonderful life are staged by Mira children and presented before huge audiences; Ratha-Yatra (Pilgrim-procession) in which Vaswaniji's life-size portrait is taken in a beautifully decorated *ratha* (chariot) in a procession through various roads of Poona, "Dada-Yagna" where sacred havan fire is lit and blankets and coins distributed among the poor and the needy, Dada-Langar where over 5000 people take meals; feeding of brother birds and animals; Vaswaniji's recorded speeches; purse presentation; Guru Dakshina; tributes to Vaswaniji; Akhand Path (continuous, unbroken recitation) of Guru Granth Sahib and Nuri Granth; *nam-kirtan prakirma* and *aarati* at Sadhu Vaswani Chowk form most of the items in the programme of Vaswaniji's birthday celebrations.

Every month on the second Ekadasi "Dada-Yagna" is observed in Poona and in Bombay with deep devotion and enthusiasm to commemorate the passing on of Vaswaniji.

Every year in January a Maha Yagna is held in remembrance of the passing on of Vaswaniji with a three days' programme of prayers, worship and service of the poor.

Vaswaniji's poetical compilations in Sindhi language were brought together and printed in a book form entitled "Nuri Granth" on the occasion of his 91st birthday, on 25 November 1970.

A year earlier, on 25 November 1969, Vaswaniji's 90th birthday, the Indian Posts and Telegraphs issued a commemorative stamp as a mark of respect. The postage stamp was released by B. P. Gajendragadkar, Ex-chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The function was held in the Mira Nagar in the presence of a distinguished gathering.

In New Delhi, the capital of India a function was also held at the Community Hall of

Laxmibai Nagar, on this day where Inder Kumar Gujral, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, released the commemorative stamp before a distinguished gathering.

A day earlier, on 24 November 1969, the Pusa Road, one of the main roads of New Delhi, on which stands the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, was renamed as Sadhu Vaswani Marg at a function presided over by Kapoor Sing, President, Theosophical Society, New Delhi.

A network of institutions is growing up in Rajasthan, too. Sadhu Vaswani Sewa Mandal in Udaipur, Sadhu Vaswani Vidyalaya in Jaipur and Sadhu Vaswani Niketan in Bikaner have been started to serve the Sindhi community of Rajasthan and spread Vaswaniji's message to hearts aspiring for the life of the spirit.

In Bombay a triangular patch of land at the junction of Turner Road and Swami Vivekananda Road in Bandra has been turned into a children's park. In February 1970, the Markets and Gardens Committee of the Greater Bombay Municipal Corporation recommended the Corporation that the park be named as Sadhu Vaswani Bagh. The Corporation passed a resolution on 26 June 1970 to this effect thus honouring the sacred memory of Vaswaniji.

In January of 1969, on the 17th to be precise a 10 ft. bronze statue of Vaswaniji was installed in the centre of the road near St. Mira's English Medium School. The statue faces the road coming from the railway station. With the right hand index finger raised above, it tells the people that God is one and so His creatures should live as members of one brotherhood. One of the inscriptions on the pedestal bears these words : "Children of the earth, ye all are one!"

In 1966, soon after Vaswaniji shed his mortal coil, the Poona Municipal Corporation passed a resolution to the effect that Vaswaniji's memory be kept alive by installing a satute close to the Mira Campus.

The Brotherhood Association was requested to raise the necessary funds for the statue and have it prepared.

In 1965, the Municipal Corporation had renamed the Connaught Road on which the Mira Campus is located as Sadhu Vaswani Path. With the installation of Vaswaniji's statue, the very chowk has come to be known as Sadhu Vaswani Chowk.

The Statue was prepared by B. R. Khedkar and the consecration ceremony was performed by Hotchand Advani on 17 January 1969.

Vaswaniji's work in Poona is growing under the aegis of the Brotherhood Association of which brother Jashan has been made the Life-Trustee. Apart from the Mira Nagar where all activities are now centred, the Brotherhood Association has acquired a spacious 7½ acre plot of land in the Koregaon Park area, where it is proposed to build the new premises of St. Mira's College. The new property has been named "Sadhu Vaswani Vidya Nagar".

Vaswaniji lives and will continue to live as long as the sun will radiate warmth and light, as long as the clouds will shed rain and refresh the parched earth, as long as the season of spring will bring with itself red roses in full bloom blushing upon their branches and as long as the nightingales will pour forth their sweet melodious strains. For Vaswaniji will continue to live in the hearts of his devotees.

Poona has veritably become a place of pilgrimage for numerous devotees and admirers of Vaswaniji and many more other aspirants, who make it a point to visit his room and his sacred samadhi, to pay obeisance and seek his blessings. They have this firm faith that Vaswaniji still lives and blesses the sincere seekers.

Holy, holy is become the Mira Nagar in which Vaswaniji passed the last sixteen years of his earth-life. Holy is become the ground for Vaswaniji's feet trod over it. Holy is become the Mira Hall where Vaswaniji sat everyday for sixteen years and conducted fellowship meetings. Holy is become the room which

Vaswaniji occupied in the Dhamibai Basantsing Building with his physical presence. Holy is the sacred Samadhi of Vaswaniji where his physical body was cremated.

Looking back through half a century of my close association with Vaswaniji, meditating on his life and thought, I have often said to myself:

Verily was this life fragrant!
Verily was this life noble!
Verily was this life holy!

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49. Mrs Usha T Thadani, 6 Meenakshi Apartments, 32nd Road, Bandra, Bombay-50.

50. M/s Finer Chemicals Co, 89, Princess st, P. O Box 2324 Bombay-2

51 M/s Favourite Fabrics, 307 Lamington Road, Bombay-7.

52 M/s Durga Industries Engineers, 134 Jai Gopal Industrial Estate, 510 Bhawani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-400028.

53. M/s Mirch-Mirex Limited,
Delstar, 9-9A Hughes Road, Bombay-26.

54. M/s The Wesman Engineering Co Private Ltd,
Allenby Court, 1/2 Allenby Road, Calcutta-700020.
Branches · Bombay, Delhi & Madras

55. M/s Popatlal M Shah, Santa Cruz, Bombay.

56. M/s RITE WEAR, 233, Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, II Floor, 510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR) Bombay-400028

57. M/s RIDER WEAR, 307, Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, II Floor, 510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-400028

58. M/s Hans Textiles, 335, Jay Gopal Industrial Estate,
510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

59. M/s J. Kimatram & Co.,
79 Karve Road, Bombay-2.

60. Shri Hiranand Lakhani, Bombay.

61. Mrs Chaturi Mangharam, Bombay.

62. M/s AMCO Traders, Manufacturers:- Babla & Baba Suits,
216 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, II Floor,
510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

63. Shri & Shimati Arjan Kishindas,
10, New Pushpa Milan, Worli, Bombay-18.

64 Shri Dial G. Jagtiani,
22, Beach View, 93 Warden Road, Bombay-26.

65. M/s Indiana Apparel, Super Shaped Shirts for class people,
339, Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, III Floor,
510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

66. M/s Manoj Dress Corner, Luxury Hosiery Articles &
Children Readymade Garments, 366-A, N. C.
Kelkar Road, Near Shahade Atha Vale, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-28.

67. M/s Radio Centre,
519, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay-2.

68. M/s Kanti Stores, Mukund Mansion, Ranade Road,
Opp. Kohinoor Cinema, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

69. M/s Selection Wear, Manufacturers of : Baby Suits &
Ramper Suits, 105 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate,
510, Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

70. M/s Liflin Wear, Manufacturers of : Readymade Garments,
222 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, II Floor,
510, Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

71 M/s Wooltex Garments, 239 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate,
510, Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR),
Bombay-400028.

72. M/s Service Engineers,
5/15 Samarath Nagar, Chunabathi, Bombay-70.

73. M/s Natraj Book Mfg. Co., Stationery & Books Manufacturers, 81, West View, A-Block, 10th Khetwadi
Lane, Bombay-4.

74. M/s Metro Trading Co ,
Ashok Niwas, Ranade Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

75. M/s Amardeep Dresses, Manufacturers of :-
Frocks, Baba Suits in latest Design, Ashok Niwas, Ranade Road, Near Post Office, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

76 M/s Beauty Drapers, Dealers in : Readymade & Hosiery Garments,
Mukund Mansion, Ranade Road, Opp. Kohinoor Cinema, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28

77. M/s Roop Sangam, Speciality in Sarees,
385, N. C. Kelkar Road, Laxmi Bldg, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

78. M/s Famous Stores, House of Woolens, Woolen Suits Specialist, Dr. D'Silva Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

79 M/s Bright Drapers, Toys, Games, Sports & Novelties, 502/3 Jai Mahal, Linking Road, Khar, Bombay-52A S.

80 M/s Modesto Textiles, Tailors & Outfitters,
Opp. State Bank, 1st Floor, 504 Linking Road, Bandra, Bombay-52.

81. M/s Pohoomal Kewalram Sons, Exporters and Importers, Gandhi Mansion, II Floor, New Silk Bazar, P. O. Box-2780, Bombay 2

82. M/s R. K. Industries,
Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana, Bombay.

83. M/s Gandhi Art Printery, Commercial Printers, Stationers, Book Binders, 302 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, 510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

84. M/s Hiranand Sons,
Central Bldg., No 3, New Silk Bazar, P O. Box 2387, Bombay-2.

85. M/s Eelktromag Devices, 404, Unique Industrial Estate, Post Box 9141, Prabhadevi, Bombay-25.

86. Mrs P K. Advani,
B/6 Best Quarters, Morland Road, Near Bombay Central Bus Depot, Bombay.

87. M/s New Liberty Stores,
Ranade Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

88. M/s Diamond Products, 205 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, 510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.

89 Shri. Ratanshi N. Shah, Inspector, National Insurance Co. Ltd , Plot No. 109, Laxmi Bhuvan, Opp. Sindhi Colony, Sion, Bombay-22.

90. M/s Jumbo Apparels, Mfg. of : Quality Men's Wear, 210 Jay Gopal Industrial Estate, 510 Bhavani Shankar Cross Road, Dadar, Bombay-28.
91. M/s TOP-IN-TOWN, Shop No. 10/11 Madhav Nagar, S. Vivekanand Road, Andheri (West), Bombay-58.
92 M/s Shakti Stores, Ready Made & Hosiery Merchants, 3-4, Super Shopping Centre, Opp. Dena Bank, S V. Road, Andheri (West), Bombay-58.
93. Shri. C K. Dudaney, 7/91-A, Almeida Road, Bandra, Bombay-50.
94. M/s Advani Orlikon, Bhandup, Bombay.
95. In loving memory of Mother, Late Rukmanibai Kalachand Kripalani, Father, Late Kalachand Udharam Kripalani, Brother, Late Nanikam Kalachand Kripalani.
96. M/s Sunil Traders, Iron Merchant, 254, Sant Tukaram Road, Iron Market, Bombay-9.
97. M/s V. K. Textiles Depot, Manufacturers of Woolen and Cotton Cloth Merchant, Ghamat Terrace, Tulsipipe Road, Dadar (WR), Bombay-28.
98. M/s Burnis Apparel, Manufacturers of Ready Made Garments, Specialist in Babla, 315, Jogani Industrial Estate, Tulshipipe Road, Dadar, Bombay-400028.
99. Shrimati Sushila Lalwani, Blue Nile, 24th Road, Turner Road, Bandra, Bombay-50.
100. M/s T. T. Blades, Shriniketan, Sion (East), Bombay-22.
101. Shri Bajai I. K, B-36 Maitri Society, Sion-Trombay Road, Chembur, Bombay-71.
102. M/s Amar Trading Corporation, 339/41, Symuel Street, Rawal Chambers, 4th Floor Bombay-3.
103. M/s T. T. Blades, 9/A Saki Naka, Andheri, Bombay-400072.
104. M/s Naraindas Lakhmichand, Bankers and Commission Agents, Mahindra Mansion, 389 J. Shankarshet Marg, Bombay-2
105. M/s Heena, Binny's Textiles, Jeevan Jyot, Ghatkoper, Bombay-400077.
106. M/s Steel Art, 'S' Block, Plot No 6, Bhosri Industrial Area, Bhosri, (POONA).
107. M/s Kamani Oil Mills, 365 Katha Bazar, Bombay-9. (In sacred memory of Shri Bodaram and Shrimati Chaturibai).



DADAJI Sri T. L VASWANI

(at about the age of 65)